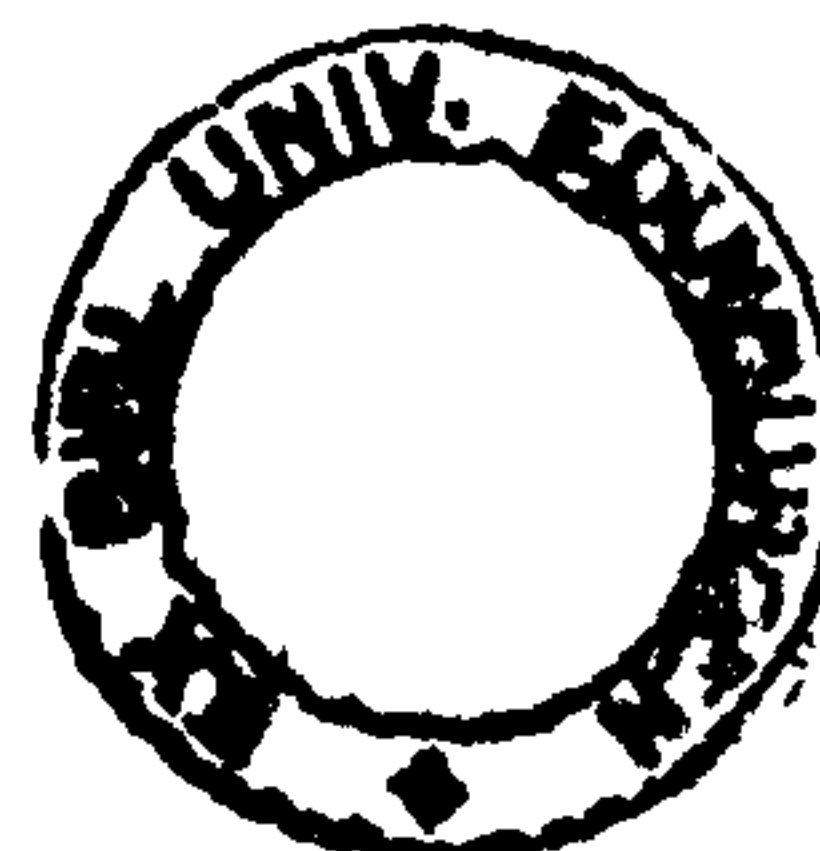


A HISTORY OF AFRICAN EDUCATION IN NYASALAND

1875 - 1945

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SUMMARY

For the half-century spanning the years 1875 to 1926, African education in the territory known for the latter portion of that period as Nyasaland was solely in the hands of Christian missionaries, sent out to this comparatively small, land-locked British Protectorate, from Europe, from the United States and from the Union of South Africa. Those missionaries who had the greatest influence educationally came from Scotland and represented that country's Established Church as well as its United Free Church.

In 1907, shortly after responsibility for the administration of this British Protectorate was transferred from the Foreign Office to the Colonial Office, and at the behest of the representatives of the Protestant missions represented in the Protectorate, the Nyasaland Government agreed to the distribution among the several Christian missions of the sum of £1,000 per annum as a grant-in-aid to their educational activities. This grant-in-aid, doubled to £2,000 per annum in 1920, represented until the mid-1920's the sum total of Government participation in the educational process, apart from a

series of strictures designed to limit the autonomy of African school teachers within the overall framework of European administered missions. These strictures, to no small degree, stemmed from the impact upon the European community in Nyasaland of the unsuccessful Rising in the southern portion of the Protectorate in the early weeks of 1915, led by the Reverend John Chilembwe.

Following the conclusion of the First World War, as part of the general re-examination of Great Britain's responsibilities in the field of social services to her dependent peoples scattered throughout the world, a Department of Education was established within the Protectorate in 1926. From this point onwards, the Nyasaland Government, in line with Great Britain's evolving Colonial policy, assumed the determining role in the shaping of educational development within the Protectorate. A series of Education Ordinances were passed by the territory's Legislative Council, a skeleton staff of able administrators was appointed, and the grant-in-aid to education to be distributed annually among the missions operating in the Protectorate was raised to £11,000. These measures were designed to impose a degree of uniformity upon the educational practices of the several missions.

Educational opportunities for Africans throughout the whole of the inter-War period in Nyasaland continued to be confined to the primary level, together with a series of courses designed to prepare numerous individuals for careers either in primary school teaching or in a variety of industrial vocations.

Throughout this period, the missions continued to play an overwhelmingly preponderant role in the day-to-day conduct and supervision of virtually all of the educational institutions in the Protectorate. In addition, they continued to contribute a measure of support for educational activity in terms of manpower and of finance, disproportionate to the degree of control they exercised over the determination of educational policy. The missions, nonetheless, enjoyed a substantial degree of support for their educational endeavours from the Government's educational officers. Mission representatives also possessed a numerical majority on the prestigious Advisory Committee on Education, whose influence on the determination of educational policy in Nyasaland was substantial.

The effects of the world-wide economic depression had a markedly depressive effect throughout the 1930's in curtailing the anticipated growth of educational opportunity

throughout the Protectorate. With the onset of the Second World War, however, and the establishment of the Colonial Development and Welfare Fund, the Nyasaland Government was able to inaugurate a number of improvements. Secondary education was initiated on a very modest scale with the opening of two Secondary Schools in 1940 and 1942. In 1941 an official Standard VI, primary school-leaving examination was introduced throughout the Protectorate. During the closing years of the War and in the wake of a visit paid to the territory by the Educational Adviser to the Secretary of State for the Colonies, an initial five-year plan for education was drawn up and endorsed. In 1945 a new Education Ordinance replaced the one which had operated since 1930. With the very considerable increase in Government funds now available, the way lay open for more rapid advance upon a broad front.

This thesis attempts to examine in some detail and in chronological sequence, the developments outlined above. Within the limitations imposed by the availability of sources, it attempts to examine the interaction of Government and the missions throughout the period under examination with particular reference to the variety of influences brought to bear upon the question of education throughout

the 1920's, the decade that saw the guidelines laid down for future development. Financial limitations severely slowed the pace of implementation of these recommendations, however, and changing colonial policies altered their priorities somewhat with the passage of years.

In addition to this general chronological narrative of educational development, this thesis attempts to examine the reaction of Nyasaland's African peoples to the creation of a new social, economic and political milieu, as reflected in their acceptance or rejection of the educational influences to which they were exposed. An important corollary of this last theme is the development from a very early stage of an African educated class. This numerically small élite, employing its newly acquired knowledge and skills to good effect, attempted by a variety of means both to speed and to shape the development of the educational process. How far they succeeded, and to what extent they influenced Governmental and mission policies, represents the concluding aspect of this theme.

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To my colleagues at both the University of Malawi and latterly at Syracuse University I owe a special debt for their invaluable moral support; in particular, to Dr. Bridglal Pachai of the former institution and to Dr. Robert Gregory of the latter.

At a more recent stage, but a crucial one, I am indebted to the professionalism of Mrs. Dorothy Farrell

of Syracuse who, as typist and technical critic has guided this lengthy work through the dangerous shoals of typography and syntax.

To conclude where I commenced, my deepest appreciation goes to those qualities of inspiration on the part of my adviser and of my wife, which in their different ways, contributed the most to the completion of this study. And finally to my father, Dr. Roderick Macdonald; he set the standard. To all three I say, "Zikomo Kwambiri."

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ABBREVIATIONS

There are a number of abbreviations which for the sake of brevity and of convenience are employed frequently throughout this work. These may be listed under several categories.

Christian Missions Operating in Nyasaland

- | | |
|----------|--|
| Liv. | - The Livingstonia Mission of the United Free Church of Scotland. |
| C.of S. | - The Blantyre Mission of the Established Church of Scotland, sometimes also referred to simply as Blantyre. |
| DRC | - The Dutch Reformed Church Mission. |
| UMCA | - The Universities Mission to Central Africa. |
| ZIM | - The Zambesi Industrial Mission. |
| NIM | - The Nyassa Industrial Mission, later, simply the Nyasa Mission. |
| BIM | - The Baptist Industrial Mission. |
| C. of C. | - The Churches of Christ Mission. |
| SDA | - The Seventh-day Adventist Mission, or, as it was subsequently known, The South-East African Union Mission of Seventh-day Adventists. |
| SDB | - The Seventh Day Baptist Mission. |
| WF | - The White Fathers Mission. |
| MAF | - The Montfort Marist Fathers Mission. |
| SAGM | - The South Africa General Mission. |
| PIM | - The Providence Industrial Mission. |
| AME | - The African Methodist Episcopal Church Mission. |
| CCAP | - The Church of Central Africa Presbyterian, formed in the inter-War period by the merging of the Liv., the C.of S. and the DRC. |

Native Associations Operating in Nyasaland

- | | |
|------|---|
| NNNA | - North Nyasa Native Association. |
| WNNA | - West Nyasa Native Association. |
| MNA | - Mombera Native Association. |
| CDNA | - Chiradzulu District Native Association. |

BNA - Blantyre Native Association.
ZNA - Zomba Native Association.
N(SP)NA - Nyasaland (Southern Province) Native Association.

Archival Sources

Zomba: The Malawi National Archives; Zomba, Malawi.
MS: The Society of Malawi Library; Limbe, Malawi.
MU: The University of Malawi Library; Limbe, Malawi.
MRC: The Catholic Secretariat Files; Limbe, Malawi.
NLS: The National Library of Scotland; Edinburgh, Scotland.
EU: The University of Edinburgh Library; Edinburgh, Scotland.
CS: The Church of Scotland Offices; Edinburgh, Scotland.
PRO: The Public Record Office; London, England.
CL: The Commonwealth Relations & Colonial Office Library; London, England.
EH: Edinburgh House (headquarters of the International Missionary Council); London, England.
NBC: The Foreign Mission Board of the National Baptist Convention; Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, U.S.A.

In addition, two frequently cited sources, the Annual Reports of the Nyasaland Education Department and the Minutes of the Annual Sessions of the Nyasaland Advisory Committee on Education are abbreviated, respectively, as Rep. Ed. Dept. and Min. Adv. Comm., together with their appropriate dates.

MAPS

Enclosed in a pocket attached to the inside back cover are three maps, illustrating the growth and location of the more important educational institutions established throughout the Protectorate. For the most part, only Full Primary or Station Schools, and Teacher Training institutions are indicated.

Map A: Depicts the situation in 1900 at the time of the first Mission Conference.

Map B: Indicates the situation in 1925 on the eve of the establishment of a Department of Education.

Map C: Presents the situation in 1945, at the close of the period under examination.

CHAPTER I

"KUYIMBA SKULU"¹

Long before the arrival in Africa of the first European, there existed among all Bantu tribes puberty rites and ceremonies which included to a greater or lesser extent instructions to the initiates on their duties and responsibilities as members of the family or clan. Immoral and cruel as some of these rites appear to the western eye, the germ of an education system was there. But education in Nyasaland, as we know it now, was introduced by the Christian Missions and has developed as an integral part of their work. The History of Education, is the History of the Missions; this is the central fact which must be borne in mind by the student of education in the Protectorate. The recent establishment of a Government Education Department has not altered the situation, it has only modified certain aspects of it.²

The above quotation may be said to state one of the central themes to be examined in this study and is considered to be applicable in only a gradually waning degree up to the conclusion of the period treated. As a result, following a brief acknowledgment of pre-European education, this chapter will discuss the

¹This phrase was commonly used in Nyasaland throughout the latter part of the nineteenth century to describe formal education. In the Chinyanja language it means "to sing school" and refers to the sing-song recitation that was common in classrooms during this period.

²Nyasaland Protectorate, Report of the Education Department for the year 1931, p. 5.

establishment of the first permanent Christian missions in Nyasaland in 1875/76 and their development together with that of those missions subsequently established, in the quarter century preceding the convening of the first Nyasaland United Missionary Conference in October, 1900.

While organized education along European lines did not materialize except in the most vestigial fashion until some years after the initial establishment of permanent Christian missions, there were, and indeed there had been for generations, indigenous forms of education. These would vary from tribe to tribe but, with differing emphasis, possessed certain common characteristics.

Religious and moral instruction played an important part in the life of the people. This was the province of the Chiefs and tribal elders. For purposes of moral instruction the tribe was divided into age groups. History, tribal government, and the organization of their society were explained to the young in order that they might come to appreciate their own role and that of others.

Practical subjects, the arts and crafts necessary for the maintenance of the tribal economy, were taught by those who had demonstrated particular skills. Physical fitness was encouraged, particularly among young men, as was a knowledge of the treatments for common maladies.

Education in sexual matters was regarded as of great importance and instruction in this sphere was entrusted only to men and women of long proven reliability.

The importance of natural phenomena and of the interaction between the individual and his environment was recognized. Much time was devoted to instruction in traditional methods of agriculture and in the care of livestock, in observation of weather patterns and in the knowledge of seasonal changes in activity. Finally, some rudimentary arithmetic was taught, liberal use being made of fingers and toes.³

This education was not formalized. There were few regularly scheduled and disciplined periods set aside for instruction, but education of a practical nature was all-pervading. No child could play the truant and all were carefully observed for signs of individual talent or skill. Once found, these were cultivated and refined. Children learned by doing, by imitation, although in some instances, in the teaching of tribal history, for example, their teachers resorted to devices such as dramatization or made their pupils commit certain passages to memory.

³For most Bantu societies at this time five seems to have been the base number. Any figure larger than twenty was referred to simply as "many." See Appendix A: "The History of Education in Malawi" by George M. Phiri, 1966.

Later, with the gradual broadening of tribal horizons and the introduction of increasing numbers of individual Africans into a European-dominated environment, the need became evident for a wider and deeper range of educational experience.

First Footsteps

Two missions, representing divergent points of view but sharing the basic tenets of the Scottish Presbyterian faith, laid the foundations and shaped the path that education was to follow in Nyasaland. Their mutual cooperation, despite occasional differences of approach, contributed measurably to that degree of success it was given to them to achieve.⁴ They were the Livingstonia Mission representing the Free Church of Scotland and the Blantyre Mission representing the Established Church of Scotland. As can be seen from their titles, both memorialized David Livingstone.⁵

It was left to the missionaries to introduce the concept of literacy as well as those of basic Christian

⁴ Shepperson Collection: Editorial in the Glasgow Herald for February 8th, 1877.

⁵ The one in the use of the explorer's name; the other in using the name of his birthplace in Lanarkshire just south of Glasgow.

principles. Nyasaland was the first British colony in Africa to receive in tangible form the result of the wave of religious and patriotic fervor that swept Scotland upon the arrival of news of the death of the famous missionary-explorer and the dramatic circumstances surrounding the bearing of his remains from Chitambo to their final resting place in Westminster Abbey.

Of the two missions, Livingstonia was initially the dominant. Credit for this should properly go to Dr. James Stewart, the galvanizing force behind the formation of the Livingstonia Mission. In 1861, Stewart had joined Livingstone on the Zambezi with a view to investigating the potential for mission work in the general vicinity of Lake Nyasa and, if this proved favourable, to select a site. Upon his return to Scotland he presented a report to the Foreign Missions Committee of the Free Church of Scotland. The Committee was already actively engaged in mission work in South Africa and was thought to be favourably inclined to the possibility of an extension of their work to the northeast.

Unfortunately, consideration of Stewart's report coincided with news from the Shire Highlands area of Nyasaland concerning the difficulties being experienced by the Magomero Mission of the Universities' Mission to

Central Africa. These difficulties included a poor climate, a deeply disturbed socio-political situation among the local African population, and an ill-considered effort at intervention on the part of the missionaries. The end result was a withdrawal of the Mission to Zanzibar. It was not destined to reestablish itself in Nyasaland for over twenty years.

As a result of this "disastrous issue . . . and other causes,"⁶ no decisive action was taken on Stewart's report and the question of establishing a mission in the area lay dormant for over a decade. In 1874, however, the new-found enthusiasm generated in Scotland for a continuation of Livingstone's life-work opened the door for a fresh attempt.

A number of wealthy and church-oriented Glasgow businessmen⁷ came forward with substantial subscriptions and detailed plans were drawn up. Dr. Stewart was

⁶ Shepperson Collection: Alexander Duff, The Proposed Mission to Lake Nyassa, (Edinburgh, 1875), p. 24. Also see Owen Chadwick, Mackenzie's Grave (London, 1959) for a full treatment of the Magomero Mission.

⁷ Notably, James Stevenson who gave his name to the road constructed in the 1880's linking Lakes Nyasa and Tanganyika; James White, the name of whose Scottish estate furnished the title for the Livingstonia Mission's Overtoun Institute; and William MacKinnon, latterly founder of the Imperial British East Africa Company in 1888.

unavailable, his presence deemed indispensable at the flourishing Lovedale Institution in Cape Province, South Africa, but on his recommendation Edward Young of the Royal Navy was selected to head the first mission party. Young had considerable prior experience of the area as he had both accompanied Livingstone on the 1858 Zambezi expedition and had subsequently headed the search party dispatched in 1867 to the Nyasa area to ascertain Livingstone's fate.

From the start the Livingstonia Mission⁸ was viewed as an industrial settlement and its composition was arranged accordingly.⁹ Of the original party of seven there were in addition to Young, five artisans; an English sailor and four Scots, the latter including an engineer, an agriculturist, a carpenter and a blacksmith. Only one ordained minister was included, the 24-year-old Robert Laws of the United Presbyterian Church, loaned for a

⁸The title seems to have been the conception of Dr. Stewart and appears to have been first used publicly in an address to the General Assembly of the Free Church of Scotland on May 26th, 1874.

⁹For a detailed examination of the implementation of this philosophy see K. J. McCracken, "Livingstonia as an Industrial Mission, 1875-1900: A Study of Commerce and Christianity in Nyasaland" in Religion in Africa, the Centre of African Studies, University of Edinburgh, 1964. (Mimeographed.)

minimum of two years by their Mission Board.¹⁰ In addition, Henry Henderson accompanied the Free Church party as an observer, representing the Established Church of Scotland.¹¹

With regard to the educational responsibilities of the mission, their instructions ran as follows:

The regular commencement of school work for teaching the young is not of absolute necessity at first, but some effort to gather the children for an hour a day to begin with should not be too long delayed; nor need there be any discouragement if the attendance is exceedingly irregular, and if there should not be for some considerable time any right comprehension on the part of the people of what is really intended to be done.¹²

In April, 1875, the mission party sailed from London taking with them a "peculiar boat necessary for conveyance up the Zambezi, for transport in sections over the mountain range of the Shire cataracts, and for the ultimate navigation of the sea-like Nyassa Lake."¹³ On the 23rd of July they landed at the Kongone mouth of the Zambezi and their little steamer, christened the ILALA

¹⁰ J. H. Morrison, Forty Years in Darkest Africa (Edinburgh, 1917), p. 4. For a more detailed biographical background see the opening chapters of W. P. Livingstone, Laws of Livingstonia (London, 1923).

¹¹ Shepperson Collection: Duff, op. cit., pp. 22-23.

¹² NLS: 7904, Instructions to Lake Nyassa Mission Party, 1875; Section VIII, Direct Missionary Work.

¹³ Shepperson Collection: Duff, op. cit., p. 28.

after the site of Livingstone's death, "was speedily bolted together and launched."¹⁴

The Local Situation

For the area surrounding the southern portion of the 360-mile-long Lake Nyasa, the years immediately preceding the arrival of the Livingstonia Mission had been a time of great turmoil and upheaval. The essentially peaceful Mang'anja and Cewa peoples inhabiting the low-lying plains and thickly forested uplands to the south of the Lake and to the east of the Shire River had been disturbed in their practice of subsistence agriculture by twin invasions.

From the 1840's onwards and with greatly increasing frequency in more recent years they had been subjected to vicious acquisitive raids by the warlike and cattle-herding Ngoni. These latter peoples represented one offshoot of the disruptions emanating from Natal following the breakup of the military empire of the formidable Chaka Zulu in the 1820's. The reverberations of this fragmentation and its resultant series of northward migrations had served in the succeeding two generations radically to rearrange the political and social composition of much of Southern and

¹⁴Morrison, op. cit., p. 4.

trans-Zambesian Central Africa.¹⁵

After crossing the Zambezi in 1835, the bulk of the Ngoni peoples under the leadership of the redoubtable Zwangandaba had swept northwards in a line paralleling Lake Nyasa but some miles inland, travelling as far as the high-land area of what is today southwest Tanzania. There, following the death of Zwangandaba in 1845, the Ngoni split into a number of factions. One continued northwards towards Lake Victoria and another moved southeastwards skirting the northern tip of Lake Nyasa; but the bulk of the Ngoni under their several leaders retraced their steps southwards through Nyasaland, finally establishing themselves both in the congenial uplands midway down the western lakeshore and immediately to the southwest of the Lake.

From these bases raiding parties regularly issued forth in search of cattle, food grains, and in particular young men and women with which to increase and replenish their numbers. The Ngoni, while selective in their choice, followed a policy of assimilation as regards the people they seized rather than disposing of them to Arab and half-caste slavers from the East Coast for material gain.

¹⁵ For a fuller understanding of the background of Ngoni migration and settlement in Nyasaland see J. Oner-Cooper, The Zulu Aftermath (London, 1966), and J. K. Ronnie, "The Ngoni States and European Intrusion," in The Zambonian Past, ed. by E. Stokes and R. Brown (Manchester, 1966).

Notwithstanding this policy of absorption, the Ngoni presence both in fact and as a constant threat had fully as disruptive an effect upon the patterns of life of the indigenous Mang'anja and Cewa peoples as did that of the Yao.

These last constituted the second threat to the peace of the lakeshore and its southern environs. Themselves essentially an agricultural people but one possessing more aggressive tendencies than the Mang'anja and the Cewa, they had in the 1850's come off second best in a struggle with the Makua for domination of the area between the Ruvuma and Lujenda rivers. Following this setback, numerous bands of Yao varying in size from a few dozen to a thousand or more gradually drifted southwards.

Trade with the entrepôts of the East Coast had traditionally supplemented the agricultural pursuits of the Yao and now, lacking a secure territorial base, their trading proclivities came to the fore. At first they were content to act as middlemen dealing in gold and ivory, but as the limited holdings of these commodities available to them from the local peoples became exhausted, increasing recourse was made to the purchase and/or seizure of the people themselves. In many cases this was accomplished with the active cooperation of local Mang'anja and Cewa

headmen and chiefs. In some cases the latter were motivated by greed for the cotton cloth and decorative beads offered in exchange for slaves by the Yao. In other instances they acted to satisfy personal grudges or to rid the community of criminal or otherwise unwanted elements.

Gradually the Yao moved further south and west until the area of their domination and exploitation merged with that of the Ngoni. Caught between this Scylla and Charybdis, the Cewa and Mang'anja peoples fell into a state of extreme demoralization and chronic economic want.¹⁶

Early Educational Efforts

This was the situation with which the Livingstonia Mission would have to deal when at daybreak on October 12th, 1875, their steamer the ILALA sailed out of the Shire and into Lake Nyasa. That same evening the party dropped anchor in a secluded bay at the tip of a narrow peninsula extending into the southern end of the Lake.

The site of this first settlement, christened Cape Maclear, had been visited briefly some years previously by Livingstone himself. Its selection was thus dictated by public sentiment as much as by more practical

¹⁶ For the Yao background see J. Clyde Mitchell, The Yao Village (Manchester, 1956).

considerations.¹⁷ Indeed, the reservations soon expressed regarding its suitability as a permanent site were to prove only too well-founded.

The terrain immediately surrounding the settlement was for the most part low-lying and swampy although scenically attractive. It provided an excellent breeding ground for fever-carrying mosquitoes and partially as a result of this factor the area was lacking in a substantial, settled population.

With the annual rains imminent, all members of the mission were at first fully engaged in constructing houses and sheds to provide shelter for themselves and for their goods. And yet even at this earliest stage education was not neglected. Throughout the long hot days they laboured, but in the evenings "there was refreshment in the beginning of schoolwork."¹⁸

It readily became apparent that there was too much work for the missionaries to cope with successfully on

¹⁷ "Fifty Years of Education in Nyasaland," an article originally appearing in the Livingstonia News but reprinted and seen in The South African Outlook, August 1st, 1927, p. 158.

¹⁸ Ibid. An interesting link between past and present can be seen in the future career of Joseph Bismarck, one of the earliest recipients of this schooling. Bismarck went on to play a significant part in the development of Nyasaland through the late 1930's. In 1968, a great-grandson was a Form IV pupil at the Church of Scotland's Henry Henderson Institute in Blantyre.

their own. Then too, there was the need to establish contact with the local peoples. The mission, therefore, invited African assistance. Gradually the word spread that cloth and food might be obtained in return for labour. In addition, the small settlement of the strange, white-skinned ^a"Azungu" represented a haven of peace and security in a troubled world. As the months slipped by the nucleus of a settled population formed, drawn from a variety of tribal backgrounds and providing a captive audience, if variously receptive to early educational experiment.

The initial barrier to even the most rudimentary efforts at attaining literacy on the part of potential pupils was the need for the missionaries themselves to master the vernacular language and to commit it phonetically to paper. Such however was the impatience of Laws to proceed that a start was made by using pictures and by introducing the alphabet. Both were unheard-of novelties and the going was painfully slow. At first it was impossible for the Africans to "see" a picture. "This is a cow," Laws would say, pointing to a picture in a child's reader. "The announcement was received with shouts of derisive laughter. But it is a cow . . . see its legs, its head, its tail? At last a precocious youth had his eyes of understanding opened and suddenly leaping body high he exclaimed 'I see

it, it is a cow!"¹⁹ In reporting to the Home Committee, Laws made no apology for his own participation in what might be regarded as a rather insignificant activity. Rather, he felt that "after having been here for months, and unable to get the object dearest to your heart begun, the smallest opening is the more eagerly grasped."²⁰

Education received a considerable impetus the following year with the arrival of reinforcements led by Stewart himself. These included three African evangelists from the Cape, trained at Lovedale. In a letter written on the 26th of October, 1876, Stewart recorded that "today we gathered together, Europeans and natives, at ten o'clock - work being stopped for an hour - and made a formal opening of the school on the station with fourteen pupils; twelve boys and two girls. We had a blackboard and a few slates and the lesson consisted of the first few letters of the alphabet and the first few numerals, with the names in English and Mang'anja. We commended the school in prayer to God and asked that His blessing might be given now and

¹⁹CU: Laws Papers. An article entitled "Laws of Livingstonia, Jubilee of the Great Missionary, 1925," which appears to have been clipped from an unidentifiable Scottish newspaper, probably published in Aberdeen or Glasgow. It is signed J.H.M., presumably J. H. Morrison.

²⁰W. P. Livingstone, Lawn of Livingstonia (London, 1923), p. 94.

henceforth to the work this day begun."²¹

One of the African evangelists, Shadrach Ngunana, was appointed head teacher. Stewart had full confidence in his capacity. "Here is the advantage," he commented, "of bringing some trained natives with us. Within three days after our arrival we can open the school and leave it in his [Ngunana's] care with confidence. . . . Dr. Laws is also relieved from a work which though necessary is bad expenditure of his time at present. . . ."²²

With a qualified teacher, the need now was for a sufficiency of pupils. Soon the number was augmented by the enrollment of several sons of Makololo petty chiefs. The latter were former employees of Livingstone who had accompanied him on his first journey to the Lake and on being paid off, had elected to settle on the Lower Shire rather than return to their homes on the Zambezi. Thanks to their comparative affluence and degree of sophistication they had swiftly gained an ascendancy over the indigenous peoples. Intermarrying with them, they were by now firmly ensconced in positions of authority.

²¹Shopperson Collection: From a letter written by Dr. Stewart appearing in the Daily Review, February 6th, 1877.

²²Ibid.

The Makololo princelings arrived accompanied by a retinue of young men and boys who served as their companions and attendants. A number were enrolled as students, and while their young masters for the most part soon wearied of the discipline imposed by life upon the Mission station and returned home, many of the attendants remained. Indeed, the fact that "some of them made greater progress in their lessons and took higher places in class,"²³ was regarded by the missionaries as providing a salutary demonstration of the equality of man to the young aristocrats who tended to have "an inflated conception of their own importance."²⁴

Time passed and the school routine became established. The curriculum was confined to instruction in the reading and writing of the vernacular, at which the missionaries both African and European were becoming increasingly proficient, and some elementary arithmetic. In addition, the pupils were obliged to devote two hours every afternoon to manual labor. The younger children had the school gardens and raked and generally kept tidy the Station grounds. The older and more advanced pupils were

²³"Fifty Years of Education in Nyasaland," op. cit., p. 158.

²⁴Ibid. Many of these sons of Makololo chiefs were subsequently returned to school by their fathers, but this time to the Church of Scotland Mission in Blantyre.

taught the rudiments of simple woodwork. With this knowledge they were able to produce furniture, doors, window frames and shelving both for the school and for the Mission generally. In reporting home, Stewart conceded that "The value of their labour is not great but we are anxious to induce the habit of work and as Livingstonia must be in every sense an industrial settlement, we wish this work of the boys at school to be made a part of the arrangements from the very first."²⁵ As for the girls, there was a sewing class and work in preparing food for the students' meals.

The number of students in these early years was limited not only by the difficulty in persuading potential scholars to attend regularly, but by the paucity of teachers. To remedy this lack, once a pupil passed through the first two classes he was put to work teaching the alphabet to beginners while simultaneously continuing his own studies.

Seeking improvement in teaching methods, Stewart remarked in a memo to all staff members thirteen months after the inauguration of the school; "This [improvement] will only be secured by frequent visits to the school from yourself and by pointing out what is erroneous in method . . . the teachers go over too much ground. Object lessons

²⁵ Shepperson Collection: Letter from Stewart to the Daily Review, February 6th, 1877.

should be frequently given." With this in mind, and perhaps with an eye to the frustrations of irregular attendance, Stewart suggested that "lessons on a large diagram of the clock should [be] daily given till all are able to tell the time."²⁶

The Move to Bandawe

As the 1870's drew to a close, it became increasingly apparent that a new site must be found for the Livingstonia Mission's central station. Two considerations were paramount. First, the site selected must be more healthful. This presumed some elevation from the lakeshore while remaining sufficiently close to permit easy access by steamer. Second, the station must be established in an area more thickly populated than that at Cape Maclear where, in addition to the fundamental drawback of a sparse indigenous population the Mission had been further handicapped by its policy of what might be termed positive neutrality vis-à-vis the slave trade. This policy had been laid down in Scotland and prevented the Livingstonia missionaries from forcibly freeing captured slaves from the many caravans passing by Lake Nyasa on route to the coast. Indeed in certain circumstances, the Mission was even forbidden to

²⁶ NLS: 7904, Summary of Instructions and Hints for the Livingstonia Mission, November 26th, 1877.

grant sanctuary to individuals escaping from captivity and fleeing to the station at Cape Maclear. As a consequence, the scope of the Mission's work came more and more to depend upon an unpredictable and sporadic trickle of alienated and rootless refugees representing a variety of tribal backgrounds. This did not appear to provide a firm foundation for a securely based ministration capable of steady expansion.

Ever since their arrival in 1875/76, Young, Laws, Stewart and others had explored the lakeshore singly or together both by means of the ILALA and on foot. In 1878 two sites midway up the western shore of the Lake were occupied as observation posts and as substations for mission work.²⁷ A further investigation was undertaken for a permanent site. Such factors were taken into consideration as access to the lakeshore, fertile soil, a plentiful supply of timber and of water, average rainfall and temperature, and above all the existence of satisfactory relationships with the local African peoples.²⁸

The choice finally fell upon Bandawe, a site located more or less halfway up the western shore. In

²⁷ Shepperson Collection: Report from Stewart to G. Smith, December 31st, 1879.

²⁸ Ibid. Also, NLS: 7904, Summary of Instructions, op. cit.

1879 the site was occupied and a small school opened. In September, nine boys were sent south as boarders to the central school at Cape Maclear.²⁹ Between 70 and 100 students were enrolled in the local school. At first the Mission's hold was precarious, however, and as a result of deaths and departures for home leave among the Livingstonia staff the Dandawe school was temporarily closed down in March of 1880.³⁰ Not until the following year was school-work recommenced with the official transference of the Mission's headquarters to Dandawe from Cape Maclear. With the retirement of Young and the return of Stewart to Lovedale, the 30-year-old Laws assumed control. For almost half a century to come his was the dominant personality in the development of the Mission.

The people among whom the Livingstonia Mission was destined to make its greatest impact were the Tonga³¹ and, to a lesser extent, the Ngoni, notably those under the

²⁹NLS: 7910, Livingstonia Mission Report for 1880, p. 2.

³⁰Ibid.

³¹For both general and detailed background on the Tonga see J. Van Volsen, The Politics of Kinship: A Study of Social Manipulation Among the Lakeside Tonga of Nyasaland (Manchester, 1964). Also, by the same author, see "Notes on the History of the Lakeside Tonga of Nyasaland," African Studies, Vol. XVIII, No. 3 (London, 1959); and, "The Missionary Factor Among the Lakeside Tonga," The Rhodes-Livingstone Journal, Vol. XXVI (1959).

chieftainship of Mombasa. Fortuitously, the missionaries arrived at a crucial time in the mutual relationship of these two disparate peoples. For well over a decade the Ngoni had been harrying the Tonga with a succession of raids in the course of which entire villages were burned to the ground and the best of the young men and women seized and taken back into the hills for assimilation into Ngoni society.

In desperation, the Tonga rebelled in 1875 and achieved some measure of success in beating back the Ngoni. It was a precarious victory, however, and in 1879 the Tonga having consolidated themselves in large stockaded villages, were constantly on their guard against the probability of renewed attacks. It was in this climate of fear and apprehension that the Scots missionaries made their appearance.

The white man was not a totally unknown phenomenon. Livingstone himself had passed this way some years previously but his stay had been brief. These newcomers, on the other hand, indicated a desire to remain. The Tonga, highly individualistic and essentially flexible, quickly directed their attention to the political advantages to be gained from an alliance with the missionaries.³²

³²Ibid. Also see McCracken, op. cit., and Norman Long, "Bandawo Mission Station and Local Politics, 1878-86," The Rhodes-Livingstone Journal, Vol. XXXII (1962).

For their part, the latter soon made it clear that it was not their policy to take formal sides in local disputes. The Tonga nonetheless perceived that one means of establishing an alliance, however informal, was to accept the education offered by the Mission. It may be that the more astute among the Tonga also recognized the practical benefits to be gained from a knowledge of European technology as the source of what to them seemed to be vast material wealth. Essentially though, it appears that the rapidity and enthusiasm with which the Tonga embraced education and thereby Christianity at this time, was from a desire to identify themselves as closely as possible with the Mission. To the Tonga the Mission represented in the final analysis a haven in time of trouble and a potential ally in what for them was a question of survival.³³

In the midst of this complex but potentially fruitful political situation the missionaries set to work, but in these initial stages they harboured few illusions with

³³ McCracken, in an unpublished Ph.D. dissertation on the development of the Livingstonia Mission, Cambridge University, 1967, refers to headman Chigo of Chinteché insisting upon being provided with a European teacher. Additionally, Laws in 1881 stated that "only those at school or apprentices, or those in the steamer [the ILALA] . . . would [be permitted to] live with us." NLS: 7911, Bandawe Journal entry for April 18th, 1881. For a thoughtful treatment of much wider application see H. A. C. Cairns, Prelude to Imperialism: British Reactions to Central African Society, 1840-1890 (London, 1965).

regard to the motivation of the Tonga. As one of their number wryly remarked, "Converts to calico could be got easily enough, but converts to Christ was a very different matter."³⁴

Initially, the missionaries, Scot and African alike, spent much of their time visiting the outlying villages in attempts to persuade parents to send their children or at least their sons to school. It was essential to convince both prospective pupils and their parents of the practical value to them of the education offered. This at first was difficult. The parents perceived little value in "counting letters" as reading was initially regarded. The children for their part, observing the pay their parents received for manual labor, demanded similar recompense for the effort they expended upon their studies.

These demands were met by the award of "gifts" or "prizes" awarded in the first instance simply for physical attendance and then gradually as recognition for a comparative proficiency in mastering the simple lessons. These prizes took the form of "a little salt, or, a piece of cloth, or, a [fish]hook; these were the first things

³⁴"Fifty Years of Education in Nyasaland," op. cit., p. 159.

to be given to the children."³⁵

In the course of time less material but equally important advantages became evident. As one of the earliest missionaries recalled:

School-work was then to the adult an unexplainable fad of the Europeans and to the children a novelty. . . . If novelty held the attention of the children long enough a great step was reached when they realized that all the books they saw in use were made up of the letters of the alphabet and that

³⁵ Oral interview with Mr. Hancock N'goma conducted at Chinteché on April 6th, 1966. A further verbatim extract from the transcript of this interview serves to illuminate this and related points.

"At that time, a person, a boy or a girl to go to school was very, very difficult. Because our parents didn't like us to go to school. The first teachers had work to find children to come to school. They went into the villages to seek for children. It was the work of the teachers to go to the villages to seek for children, not the children themselves to come to school. If a child has sat together with his father or his mother, the teacher couldn't come here to get this child to go with him to the school. It was very difficult. When the child is near his father or his uncle, when a teacher comes there and says, 'ah, amana, child, go with us to the school,' then, there is his father or his mother and there will be a fight with the teacher. So the missionaries thought a plan of taking the children to school was to give some gifts or prizes to the children. A little salt, or, a cloth, or, a little hook. These were the first things to be given to the children. The one who got this from the school, when going home his friends or his father would say, 'ah!, go tomorrow again. Tomorrow you may go to school again. These Europeans are good people. They are kind people. They have given you salt, they have given you a hook, they have given you a cloth.' Because in those days cloth were [*sic*] much needed, even salt was much needed, everything in this country as we see now it was not in those days." (Italics to indicate emphasis.)

when these were mastered and the making of syllables by them, they had not to face each fresh book as if it were a new primer, but could at once hear the book speaking to them and affording them interesting information. Writing, laborious in its acquirement was found to be a means of telling their friends what they were doing and getting news of them when at a distance. It was found also that a letter could be a silent messenger revealing no secrets it contained to the individual carrying it.³⁶

Nevertheless, regularity of attendance continued to remain a vexing problem and a source of considerable frustration to the teachers. There were, of course, a number of legitimate explanations for this state of affairs. The traditional division of labour in the village within accepted and defined spheres took precedence over schoolwork. Writing in the late 1920's the noted educator, A. Victor Murray, admitted that "the matter of attendance is a difficulty. . . . A great deal depends upon local conditions and on the seasons. In central Nyasaland the gardens have to be watched at night owing to the depredations of game and accordingly even a 5-hour day at school next day is too long."³⁷

³⁶ "Fifty Years of Education in Nyasaland," op. cit., p. 159.

³⁷ A. Victor Murray, The School in the Bush (London, 1929), p. 81.

An attendant difficulty was that of encouraging mental discipline. With perhaps permissible cynicism one missionary observed that,

. . . if a pupil came to school for two days and learned to know the letter O because it was round like the moon, by the third day he was tired and needed a day or two to rest and when he came back if he remembered O he had forgotten the other lessons and the work was all to do over again. If he remained a week at school on his return, then a month's rest would be absolutely necessary afterwards.³⁸

A diet lacking in protein was very likely a contributory factor, as well. James W. Jack, the author of an early history of the Livingstonia Mission based on primary documentary sources, reflected more philosophically that the irregularity of attendance arose "not from any external opposition to the [school]work, but from the habits of the people who had not been trained to regularity in anything."³⁹ Moreover, the physical conditions obtaining in the bulk of these schools were scarcely conducive to concentration. Most schools were rudimentary in the extreme and many were initially held in the open air. To

³⁸"Fifty Years of Education in Nyasaland," op. cit., p. 159.

³⁹J. W. Jack, Daybreak in Livingstonia (London, 1901), p. 121. It is interesting to note that while Jack had access in Scotland to voluminous primary sources of information, he never set foot in Africa.

take what is perhaps an extreme example, although described by a sympathetic witness, we are told by Donald Fraser that

When I came out first a goodly part of the schools then in existence were not even housed. The scholars met at the gate of the cattle kraal or in some tidied open space. Villagers could pass their idle time sitting about on the outskirts, amusing themselves with what they reckoned the eccentricities of the teachers and pupils. Goats and sheep charged into the classes distracting all attention, and sometimes a snarling couple of dogs preparing for combat would send a class flying. In these days schools were little more than tolerated.⁴⁰

Many early schools were of the libanda type. This consisted of a three-sided, open-fronted, rectangular building of wattle and daub with a thatched roof. For seats there were wooden benches supported by forked poles driven into the beaten earth floor. A few fortunate students possessed slates upon which to write but the majority drew their lessons with sticks in smooth-raked patches of sand.

With the proliferation of these small village schools made possible by the concentration of population near Bandawe due to the unsettled conditions resulting from Tonga-Ngoni hostility, an increase in the number of locally trained African teachers became imperative.⁴¹ In the light of the modest nature of initial scholastic goals, teachers

⁴⁰ Donald Fraser, Winning a Primitive People (London, 1914), p. 259.

⁴¹ "Fifty Years of Education in Nyasaland," op. cit., p. 159.

possessing little formal schooling but with the requisite qualities of character were regarded as perfectly acceptable. The general feeling was that

A native teacher might take three weeks to do what a European could do in one, but ten native teachers could be in ten different villages while the European was confined to one. A boy who could read the New Testament in the vernacular could surely teach the alphabet and so set the time of the European free for what the Native could not do. As the standard of the class rose, the standard of the teacher had to rise and he had to keep in advance of his class.⁴²

The teachers were assisted by "monitors" selected from among the bigger boys⁴³ and possessing (sometimes a fine distinction) slightly less education than the teachers and slightly more than the pupils whose discipline and powers of concentration they "monitored." As a teacher of that time recalls it, during class "monitors could stand to the back of the class so that if a child looks this way they say, 'ah, look there'; if he looks that way, 'ah no, look there!' These were monitors."⁴⁴

As for the pupils, the disparity in their ages helps perhaps to explain the need for monitors. "Many a big strong warrior who had washed his spear in blood," we

⁴² Ibid., p. 160.

⁴³ NLS: 7904, Livingstonia Mission Report for 1880, p. 3.

⁴⁴ Oral interview with Mr. Hanock N'goma.

are told, "squatted down among children of five and six years of age spelling out of the same little reading-book and repeating such sentences as; 'The dog bit the monkey,' and 'The dog ate our porridge.' Even women with babies on their backs became anxious to learn."⁴⁵

Mothers with babies were one thing, but it was at first difficult at Bandawe to attract younger girls to school. The majority over the age of 12 or 13 were engaged and it was feared that the proximity involved in coeducation might upset some of the betrothal arrangements.⁴⁶

Still, schools continued to be established and a steady progress was stubbornly pursued. In December, 1881, there had been but two schools in the Bandawe area with some 147 pupils on the rolls. By 1893, on the eve of the transfer of the Mission's headquarters to the Kondowa plateau, some 40 schools were functioning under Bandawe's aegis with a total enrollment of 3,230.⁴⁷

From an early stage Laws attempted to inculcate the

⁴⁵ Jack, op. cit., p. 315.

⁴⁶ Most of the early missions established in Nyasaland recognized this fact and instituted separate boarding schools for girls with well-supervised dormitories. At Blantyre, the girls' dormitory was located directly behind Hetherwick's manse and the girls were locked in at night.

⁴⁷ This figure was quintupled by the turn of the century.

typically Scottish principle of "self-help,"⁴⁸ and to reverse the idea that study was a chore for which payment should be made. As early as 1883 the first sale of primers printed in Tonga were offered to schoolboys. The price was one chicken per book. The first school fees were levied upon pupil-teachers who paid 6d a month in order to learn English. The introduction of school fees of a nominal nature on a more widespread basis took longer, but the practice had achieved general acceptance throughout the Livingstonia Mission's sphere of influence by the end of the century.⁴⁹ Both the purchase of schoolbooks and the payment of fees were regarded additionally as means of ensuring a more regular attendance and of improving "the attention of the scholars."⁵⁰

Attempts were also made to involve the whole community in the work of the school. The principle was introduced of requiring villages to construct their own school building before making application for a teacher to be sent to them. In this way "the people, taught to regard [the

⁴⁸ A common enough phrase in the independent Malawi of 1968, but presumably originating in the title of the best-selling book of that name; Samuel Smiles, Self-Help (London, 1859). Smiles was born at Haddington in Scotland and was a graduate of Edinburgh University.

⁴⁹ Livingstone, op. cit., p. 209.

⁵⁰ Shepperson Collection: "Five Year Report of the Livingstonia Mission, 1886-1890."

schools] as their own, took a pride in maintaining them."⁵¹ Writing in 1888, Laws reported that "During the holidays Marenga's people under the superintendence of the teacher repaired the school, plastering the floor and part of the walls. At Chikuru's an addition 60 feet long was made to the school. . . . One mile beyond Chikuru's is the village of Fuka. This chief and his people built a school in 1883 which, when ready for opening was burned down by Ngoni raiders." Laws went on to say that the school was now being rebuilt and that 400 trees had been cut down for use as building material and carried some six miles to the site of the school.⁵²

Progress among the lakeshore Tonga was appreciable, therefore, throughout the 1880's, but to the missionaries at Bandawe this was not in itself sufficient. The continuing hostility of the Ngoni represented a moral and an educational challenge to them as well as a problem of defense and a source of potential destruction for their schools.

⁵¹Livingstone, op. cit., p. 210.

⁵²NLS: 7906, Free Church of Scotland Monthly, 1888.

Among the Wild Ngoni

The Ngoni of the central uplands under their chief, Mombera,⁵³ were resentful of the Mission's decision to establish its central Station among the despised Tonga. But while anxious for the missionaries to transfer their headquarters inland they were nevertheless sceptical as regards education. They felt that its introduction might sap the will of the young men who comprised the warrior class on which Ngoni society was traditionally based and draw off their enthusiasm for cattle and slave raiding. The chiefs and headmen were also uneasy, speculating that their children might, in gaining knowledge their elders did not possess, come to despise them.

The Livingstonia Mission had been in touch with Mombera's Ngoni almost from its beginnings as a result of the exploratory journeys conducted by Laws and Stewart. In 1882, William Koyi, the most able of the Lovedale-trained Africans serving at Bandawe, had become the Mission's first permanent representative at Mombera's kraal. Koyi proved particularly acceptable thanks to the similarity between his own native tongue, a variant of Zulu, and the Ngoni language. In 1885 he was joined at Mombera's by Walter Elmslie who was to remain for much of his career "Among the

⁵³ Sometimes rendered as Mbelwa.

Wild Ngoni,"⁵⁴ but for a time suspicion and a certain wariness continued to prevent the commencement of formal education.⁵⁵

Success was finally achieved in an unexpected fashion. The rains were very late in coming in 1885 and prolonged drought had brought suffering to Ngoniland. The usual tribal methods of rainmaking had been attempted to no avail. Finally, in desperation, an appeal was made to the missionaries to try their hand. As Elmslie noted, it was a grand opportunity, and he proceeded to take full advantage of it. A service was conducted by William Koyi following which Elmslie made a special prayer for rain. "Next day the sky became black with clouds, and rain fell in torrents."⁵⁶

Needless to say, this incident made a profound impression upon the Ngoni and from this time forward the work of the missionaries was viewed in a new light and with an enthusiasm and curiosity that previously had been lacking. In the spring of 1886 permission was given to open a

⁵⁴The title of the book (Edinburgh, 1899) in which Elmslie described his experiences.

⁵⁵Such was the attraction of education, however, that several young men would regularly creep to Elmslie's house under cover of darkness and at the risk of death in order to obtain instruction.

⁵⁶Jack, op. cit., p. 158.

few schools on an experimental basis.

The news of this decision, reached at a council of headmen, was brought to William Koyi on his deathbed; a victim at the early age of 40 of tuberculosis brought on by the incessant strain of his work over the past five years. We are told that the last words he spoke were those of the Biblical Simeon, "Lord, now lettest Thou Thy servant depart in peace for mine eyes have seen Thy salvation."⁵⁷ Certainly, Koyi's patient cultivation of the ground was a major factor in bringing about the reversal of the Ngoni position. Writing within a year of Koyi's death, the Rev. Horace Waller paid him this tribute.

Few more noble fellows have lived and died at their posts, content to do honestly and thoroughly the work given him to do and to leave the rest to God. Such is the impression of one who never read a letter of his without being humbled in the presence of his worth.⁵⁸

For the next few years stresses and strains continued to be felt as a result of internal disputes between opposing Ngoni factions struggling for supremacy. A station was opened in 1889 at Elkwendeni, however, and by the time the Mission's headquarters was transferred to Kondowe in 1894, Ngoniland was fully incorporated within the system of

⁵⁷ Livingstone, op. cit., p. 222.

⁵⁸ NLS: 7905, Rev. Horace Waller, The Title-Deeds to Nyasaland (London, 1887), p. 23.

village schools whose new centre was to be the Overtoun Institute.

Before examining the work of those other Christian Missions commencing their labours within Nyasaland in the course of this opening period, a note on developments at Cape Maclear. Although a majority of the students and skilled labourers had moved to Bandawe in company with the Mission party, the village settlements formed as a result of the Mission's presence remained. Civil jurisdiction had been conferred upon Chimlolo, a local headman, while the supervision of education and worship was entrusted to a series of Mission-trained Nyasas.⁵⁹ The last of these was Albert Namalambe who had been the first Nyasa to be baptised by the Livingstonia Mission.⁶⁰ He remained in charge at Cape Maclear from 1884 until his death nearly a quarter of a century later in 1908.⁶¹

⁵⁹ It should be understood that "Nyasa" is not a specific tribal category but refers to all Africans originating from Nyasaland. It was presumably first popularized by Europeans in the Rhodesias to distinguish immigrant workers from Nyasaland from indigenous African peoples.

⁶⁰ Morrison, op. cit., p. 6. The ceremony took place on March 27th, 1881, some six months before the transfer of the Mission's headquarters to Bandawe.

⁶¹ McCracken Ph.D. dissertation. McCracken lists other Nyasas who briefly held authority at Cape Maclear as: Andrew Mwana Njobvu, Harry Zamatgona and Charles Konde.

Nevertheless, despite the ability of the men to whom authority had been delegated by the Mission, "the immediate effect of the [European] missionaries' departure was to jeopardize the whole position of education on the promontory."⁶² Outsiders from Chief Mponda's area stole from and generally harassed the mission villagers. School attendance rapidly declined until, by the latter part of 1882, the school was forced to close down completely. With the arrival of Namalambo some sort of order and stability was restored and the school was reopened; but although the small band of original mission followers remained loyal, little headway was made in converting the adjacent Yao who, for their part, tended to equate the missionaries with the newly-formed Administration and its growing determination to bring a halt to their slave-trading activities.

That this represented a setback is undeniable, and yet it appears to indicate that, as at Bandawe, the initial impact of the Livingstonia Mission was directly related to the local political situation rather than to its own merits as a mission, whatever those merits might be in African eyes.

⁶² Ibid.

Beginnings at Blantyre

Despite the paucity of Livingstonia's initial resources, the mission was called upon from an early stage to come to the assistance of its fellow countryman at Blantyre, Henry Henderson. The latter had reconnoitred the south of the Lake and had selected an excellent site. Situated in the Shire Highlands at the healthful altitude of 3,500 feet, it commanded the gradual descent to the Shire River valley. And yet, there was a problem. Surveyor and property manager Henderson might be,⁶³ but he felt inadequate to the responsibilities entailed in establishing and administering a mission station. As a result, Laws and Stewart responded to his plea for help and took it in turn to reside and work on the Blantyre station.

The area, though more densely populated than that adjacent to Cape Maclear, was also more immediately affected by Yao slave-raids. The Mission station in consequence, was to a larger degree than at Livingstonia in the nature of an oasis surrounded by hostile territory. How great a practical as well as psychological effect this circumstance had upon successive missionaries it is difficult to assess; but it appears that, with the passage of time as the educational

⁶³ Henderson had previously been employed in these capacities in Queensland, Australia.

policies of the two missions took shape, Blantyre came to emphasize its central station and its boarding school at the expense of a widespread proliferation of village schools, to a greater degree than did Livingstonia.

To begin with, however, the pattern was one of more or less individual tutoring followed in 1878 by the formal opening of a school. Here, as at Livingstonia, mission-employed labourers and their children provided the first students. Subsequently, as has been noted, a number of the sons of Makololo chiefs from the Shire Valley were enrolled and one of Livingstonia's African evangelist/teachers was seconded to run the school. Essentially, the same simple curriculum as that at Cape Maclear was followed.⁶⁴

Throughout the 1880's educational work continued to progress. Early setbacks, however, had been experienced. These were a result of the furore caused in Scotland by the disclosure there of certain irregularities that had occurred in the course of the Mission's handling of what it conceived to be its responsibilities in the field of the administration of criminal justice with regard to the local population. Punishments had been inflicted that had resulted in more

⁶⁴ Alexander Hetherwick, The Romance of Blantyre (London, 1932), p. 26.

than one death. There had been a searching enquiry,⁶⁵ as a result of which the Mission was virtually restarted in 1881 with a substantially new staff.

Early in that year, a Special Committee appointed by the General Assembly of the Established Church of Scotland was able to report that in its opinion "there is now no ill-will against the Mission [on the part of the bulk of the local African peoples] . . . but on the contrary good feeling on the part of neighboring chiefs is evidenced by the fact that upwards of twenty of their sons are now at school at Blantyre."⁶⁶ Some of the chiefs have expressed a wish for similar education for their girls."⁶⁷

⁶⁵For a full treatment of this period, but one drawn largely from official sources, see A. J. Hanna, The Beginnings of Nyasaland and North-Eastern Rhodesia, 1859-1895 (Oxford, 1956). For a more recent treatment that approaches the subject from another standpoint and draws extensively upon mission sources, see Rev. Andrew C. Foss, "The Foundations of the Blantyre Mission, Nyasaland," in Religion in Africa (Edinburgh, 1964). (Mimeographed.) Rev. Foss has recently completed an expanded interpretation of this period in an unpublished Ph.D. thesis, Edinburgh University, 1963. Also, for a contemporary viewpoint, see Andrew Chirnside, The Blantyre Missionaries: Discreditable Disclosures (London, 1980), and Alexander Riddol, A Reply to "The Blantyre Missionaries: Discreditable Disclosures" (Edinburgh, 1980).

⁶⁶This presumably includes some of the Makololo princelings previously referred to in connection with the Livingstonia Mission at Cape Maclear.

⁶⁷NLS: 7904, Report by a Special Committee, signed T. G. Murray, Convenor; Edinburgh, February 28th, 1887.

Support for education generally was forthcoming from the Committee which expressed the desire to see "missionaries selected on account of their qualifications as teachers and not as artisans."⁶⁸ This marked a distinct divergence from Livingstonia's policy, as did the suggestion made and accepted that industrial work should be reduced to a minimum. Emphasis was to be placed upon evangelism and upon the elementary forms of literary education that contributed to this end.

Assuming control at this time of flux and re-thinking was the Rev. David Clement Scott. Although he was destined to remain in the country for little more than a decade before departing for Kenya, Scott made a profound impact on the Mission generally and left his stamp upon many specific aspects of its work.⁶⁹

Much has been made in the past of the differing approaches to education and evangelism on the part of the Blantyre and Livingstonia Missions. Differing opinions

⁶⁸ McCracken Ph.D. thesis.

⁶⁹ Notably in his massive and comprehensive A Cyclopaedic Dictionary of the Mang'anja Language (Edinburgh, 1892), and in his design and supervision of the construction, largely by African labour, of the Blantyre Church. This is still today, more than 70 years after its completion, one of the most impressive buildings in Central Africa. Rev. A. C. Ross includes a great deal of material on Scott in his recent Ph.D. thesis.

still exist on the subject,⁷⁰ but it would appear that with regard to their personal philosophies of mission work and the general line they would in an ideal situation wish to pursue, there was little to choose between such men as Laws and Elmslie in the north and Scott and Hetherwick in the south. The difference lay rather in the home backing enjoyed by the two missions and perhaps to a lesser extent, the local social and political context in which they found themselves operating.

This first point has been most ably brought out by McCracken, who notes that Blantyre unlike Livingstonia was "brought under the financial, and from 1881 the administrative, control of the [overall] Foreign Missions Committee [of its home Church] thus surrendering, though not without agitation from the missionaries, its claim to be treated as a special body deserving of individual attention. Where Livingstonia's home-links were with Glasgow shipbuilders and chemical manufacturers, Blantyre's by contrast were with Edinburgh clerics, distinguished leaders of the Church."⁷¹ As such, by reason of their calling, the latter were more absorbed with questions of evangelisation and

⁷⁰As can be seen in the published and unpublished work of Ross and McCracken for example.

⁷¹McCracken Ph.D. thesis.

conversion per se as ends in themselves. It is perhaps relevant also to point out that throughout this early period Livingstonia commanded a far greater proportion of the general missionary enthusiasms of its home Church members, and had the spending of a substantially larger purse.

The second factor is simply that, through circumstance, Livingstonia assumed or was left by default with a virtual monopoly of the northern half of what was to become Nyasaland as a mission field. In contrast, Blantyre was to be subjected to a series of competitive evangelisms; Baptist, Roman Catholic and Seventh-day Adventist in particular.

At Blantyre therefore, Scott, though possessing a "far-reaching view and broad estimate of Mission work,"⁷² nevertheless inclined to the "residential" school of thought. This view was very likely given practical weight by Blantyre's relative lack of funds and the resultant shortage of staff as well as by the social dislocation locally which precluded a widespread proliferation of village schools. In fact, as late as 1897, only "fourteen outschools were run from Blantyre and eight from Domasi" in contrast to the 78 schools operated by Livingstonia in that year of Fraser's famous plea for 100,000 missionaries.⁷³

⁷² Ibid.

⁷³ Shepperson Collection: from the Livingstonia Annual Report for 1897/98.

In pursuing this policy, Scott was guided by his initial instructions which laid down that he as the Minister must "superintend the teaching of the school and frequently examine the scholars, giving very special attention to their religious instruction. . . . He must see that all boarders are . . . carefully supervised." In addition, he was instructed to "Endeavour to have no more scholars than the [implicitly European] teaching staff can efficiently instruct and control. . . . The teachers, male and female . . . must remember that they are not secular teachers but Christian missionaries sent out to aid the Minister in converting the heathen to Christ."⁷⁴

Six years later, in 1887, there were still only 75 pupils at Blantyre. All were boarders and 25 of them were the sons of chiefs. That this sort of environment tended to foster a form of élitism is not surprising.⁷⁵ Ross's understandably sympathetic treatment of Scott⁷⁶ is accurate in the sense that Scott did insist firmly "on the worth of

⁷⁴NLS: 7904. Church of Scotland East African Mission; "General Instructions to Missionaries," signed by James Herdman and A. Scott, Edinburgh, July 13th, 1881.

⁷⁵This point is discussed with much insight by Professor Roland Oliver in his work, The Missionary Factor in East Africa (London, 1952).

⁷⁶Rev. Ross was himself for eight years a Church of Scotland missionary in Nyasaland.

Africans." He did, nevertheless, as Ross himself states, go "out of his way to train his teachers and other skilled men in European ways both in dress and manners."⁷⁷ What Ross does not make sufficiently clear for our purposes here, is that in so doing, Scott was responding to the emerging "urban" environment that was rapidly developing during his later years in Blantyre and to the resultant increase in those demands made upon the Mission for "educated boys."

That the future careers of Blantyre's most successful graduates should be spent in greater or lesser proximity to a settled European community together with, in varying degree, a certain alienation from their own societies than was the case at Livingstonia where their opposite numbers had an opportunity to spend their lives living and working within the context of their own societies was not Scott's fault or indeed his aim. It was nonetheless an important fact of life in Nyasaland at that time.

This, however, anticipates the development of events to some extent. For the present, education in the late 1880's progressed qualitatively within its modest terms of reference while expanding quantitatively with deliberation.

⁷⁷ Rev. A. C. Ross, "The Foundations of the Blantyre Mission in Nyasaland," in Religion in Africa (Edinburgh, 1964), p. 101. (Mimeographed.)

Other Early Missions

In the meantime, a third Christian mission had entered or rather re-entered the field. This was the Universities' Mission to Central Africa which, following the several disasters which befell it in the early 1860's, had withdrawn from Nyasaland; first to the banks of the Zambezi to the south, and subsequently to Zanzibar. There a flourishing ministration had been established but the determination to return to the vicinity of the Lake had never weakened.

From the late 1870's a series of small exploratory expeditions had traveled inland from the East Coast in search of a suitable base from whence mission work might be recommenced. Most indefatigable of the UMCA's representatives was the vigorous and ascetic Rev. William P. Johnson.⁷⁸ He was instrumental in establishing a settlement in 1881 on Likoma, a small island located just off the eastern shore of the Lake almost directly opposite Bandawe to the west. An island site appeared desirable in the light of the degree of political and social unrest then prevalent. The entire area extending southwards along the lakeshore and into the floodplain immediately south of the

⁷⁸For a full biographical treatment, see Bertram H. Barnes, Johnson of Nyasaland (London, 1933).

Lake was subject to the whims of a number of Yao petty chiefs, notorious for their slaving proclivities. Among the more significant were Makanjira and Zarafi.

Coping with this situation imposed a heavy burden upon the UMCA missionaries and indeed it was not until 1894, with the successful conclusion of a series of short but sharp campaigns conducted by the Protectorate's Administration against these petty Chiefs, that the UMCA was able to develop the educational side of their work properly.

Perhaps the most successful and certainly the most novel of the UMCA's early educational innovations was the use they made of a steamer, the CHARLES JANSON, as a form of floating headquarters. Not only were a number of Africans employed in its maintenance and operation and simultaneously given schooling on board, but by means of this steamer the missionaries were able to keep in touch with numerous villages scattered along the lakeshore where it was at this stage impossible to establish permanent mission stations. The medical work in particular that was accomplished among these frequently beleaguered people went far to gain their confidence and to lay the foundations for the overall expansion that was to come in the mid-1890's. As with education itself, it should be borne in mind that for the UMCA all else is traditionally subordinate to the needs of

evangelisation and that such social services as were offered were directed largely to that end.

As the 1880's drew to a close, a fourth mission entered the Nyasaland field. This mission was sponsored by the Dutch Reformed Church of South Africa and initially drew the bulk of its support from those Scots and Dutch in Cape Province who subscribed to a rather fundamentalist brand of Presbyterianism. From the first their links with Livingstonia were strong, although their approach to the question of education tended to diverge in several respects over the course of time as the two missions developed.

The Dutch Reformed Church's (DRC) first representative was the Rev. A. C. Murray. He arrived in the country in 1888 and after spending some months working with the Livingstonia missionaries he was joined in December of 1889 by the Rev. T. C. B. Vlok. Together they "laid the foundations of an independent work at Mvera,"⁷⁹ situated on the crest of a range of hills some 30 miles inland from the southwest corner of the Lake. In time the DRC was to spread its influence throughout what is now the Central Region of Malawi, linking the sphere of the Blantyre Mission to the south to that of Livingstonia to the north. Eventually,

⁷⁹ From an anonymously written and undated pamphlet entitled The D.R.C. Mission in Nyasaland, p. 1.

these missions were to comprise the three synods of the Church of Central Africa Presbyterian or CCAP.⁸⁰

Several African teacher/evangelists trained at Bandawe were seconded to assist Murray and Vlok until they might train their own helpers from the ranks of the predominantly Cewa peoples among whom their work was centered. Writing his first Report in September, 1890, Murray noted that educational work was "but in its beginning" and that "while we have nearly 200 names on the books, we can really only count on our boarders to be regular. Of these we have at present 14."⁸¹

There was from the first a preponderant emphasis on Religious Knowledge and on literacy in the vernacular to the virtual exclusion of English and the broader range of "literary" subjects that were to develop at Livingstonia. The DRC saw their educational responsibilities as lying within a narrower framework than that of their neighbors to the north. This was to cause friction in the years to come with other mission educators and with the African peoples among whom the DRC set themselves to work.

⁸⁰ This was not finally achieved until 1926 although there was a wide measure of cooperation from the beginning.

⁸¹ Shepperson Collection: Rev. A. C. Murray's first Report. Taken from Livingstonia; Five Years Work, 1886-1890, p. 8.

At about the same time, the first Roman Catholic missionaries entered Nyasaland. Their initial endeavours were to prove as abortive as had those of the UMCA a generation earlier and for somewhat the same reasons. The pioneer missionaries were French representatives of the White Fathers, an order founded in Algeria in 1867 by Father, later Cardinal, deLavigerie. A party of five sailed from Algiers in June, 1889, and traveling via Quelimane reached the Upper Shire in late December. There they arranged to settle at Mponda's village situated near present-day Fort Johnston. Owing to the more or less perpetual state of war that then existed, the missionaries felt impelled to seek shelter within Chief Mponda's stockade, an imposing stronghold containing some 1,000 huts. There they spent the rainy season familiarizing themselves with the local peoples and learning their language. But it is reported rather cryptically that though their presence was tolerated, "Mponda's behaviour as a rule was worrying."

The following succinct account sums up their experiences over the subsequent fifteen months which concluded with their reluctant departure.

In April, 1890, the missionaries put up their own quarters and in June they were able to open a school. The pupils were Yao children only; the Anyanja being slaves were not allowed by the Yao

to attend. The spot was most unhealthy, food was scarce, and worst of all the whole length and breadth of the country even to the unexplored western districts was in a state of anarchy. The original inhabitants were gradually exterminated by the Yao who were Mohammedanised slave traders, and were constantly driven by jealousy and greed to split into factions and attack one another. At intervals, another savage tribe, the Ngoni made war on the Yao, piling horror upon horror. Several times did the Ngoni of Domwe and Dedza attack Mponda's stockade, only to be driven back. During 1890 the missionaries who had already visited 110 villages had to report that 37 villages had been destroyed, the people being killed or captured.

In February, 1891 the average attendance at the school was 32 and some of the pupils were proficient in reading and writing. England and Portugal were disputing their rights over the country. Waiting in vain for help to come from the coast, powerless to do much good in the midst of such a melee, the missionaries at last decided to give up. On June 18th, 1891 they left for Mambwe in North Eastern Rhodesia on the Stevenson Road about half way between Lake Nyasa and Lake Tanganyika.⁸²

Thus ended this first Catholic attempt to establish mission work in Nyasaland. They had every intention of returning, however, as soon as conditions became more propitious; and indeed, soon after the turn of the century not only the White Fathers but the Montfort Marist Fathers established mission fields in Nyasaland.

Education Takes Shape

By 1894 Nyasaland was beginning to take shape as a political entity. A British Protectorate had been declared

⁸²Nyasaland Protectorate, Report of the Education Department for the Year 1931, p. 19.



in 1891 and an Administration formed under the leadership of Harry Johnston.⁸³ The latter saw the suppression of the slave trade as a task having first priority and though hampered by a lack of sufficient, trained troops and a dearth of supplies generally, the years 1894 and 1895 saw the final extinction of the remaining strongholds of slave-raiding chiefs in a series of brief but well-executed campaigns that brought peace both to the southeast corner of the Lake and to its northern tip.⁸⁴ The country was now on the verge of a period of modest development.

Educationally, Livingstonia was once more in the van. Although by 1894 Bandawe could be counted a success, neither the home authorities nor Dr. Laws were satisfied with its site as a permanent headquarters. For some time Laws had envisioned "the establishment of a missionary training institution which should do for Central Africa what Lovedale has done for the natives of South Africa."⁸⁵ In 1892 he drew up and submitted to the home authorities a thoughtful and forward looking Memorandum, setting out

⁸³ For a comprehensive treatment of the development of British administration in Nyasaland in the 1890's, see A. J. Hanna, op. cit., and Roland Oliver, Sir Harry Johnston and the Scramble for Africa (London, 1957).

⁸⁴ Ibid. Full descriptions of these campaigns are also included in the two works cited above.

⁸⁵ Morrison, op. cit., p. 9.

his views as to the lines future development should follow.

Laws saw as the main aim of the Mission the creation of a "self-supporting, self-governing and self-extending Native Church."⁸⁶ Indeed he saw the European Missionary as essentially a "bird of passage" whose duty it is to "pass on as speedily as possible" as soon as the local peoples "are able to do for themselves what he goes to teach them."⁸⁷ In his view a Central Institution should be created in which Africans would be trained as artisans, teachers, evangelists and pastors. No limit would be placed upon the degree of responsibility that they might eventually be expected to assume.

As to the "external necessity for such an Institution," Laws took note of the political changes that had recently taken place. In his view the two most significant points from the standpoint of education were:

(1) The English language is destined . . . to become the dominant tongue and hence points to the necessity of education beyond the various vernaculars required for the elementary schools of different districts.

(2) The assurance of British Protection will lead, as it is already doing, to an influx of Europeans, and to a demand for educated natives to assist them in commercial and artisan work.⁸⁸

⁸⁶ Shepperson Collection: Confidential Memorandum by Laws regarding the organization and development of the Livingstonia Mission, dated 1892.

⁸⁷ Ibid.

⁸⁸ Ibid.

Besides outlining in great detail his conception of the Institution,⁸⁹ Laws took the occasion to put the educational achievements of Livingstonia, considerable though they were, into proper perspective. Noting that "the one school of 1875 had become three schools in 1886 with some ten native teachers and 300 pupils," and that these in turn had become by 1891, "32 schools with 150 teachers and 7000 pupils," he went on to enumerate the following qualifications.

"These numbers," he noted, "represent actual facts but require explanation to prevent misapprehension." First, "Regarding the Schools. Not one of these, even our best, is equipped as is required of the poorest Board School in Scotland; several indeed have to be held in the open air, and most have been begun in this way." Secondly, "Our Teachers do not reach the standard required of any pupil teacher at home; many of them could not pass the III or IV Standard required of pupils in our Board Schools." Third and last, "The 7000 scholars are never all at school; indeed if the half of them were present regularly, a great advance would be made. Still, the very presence of a child in school for a week or a fortnight at a time, now and again,

⁸⁹For a fuller treatment, see this Chapter's following section on the Overtoun Institution.

is not without its influence on the child itself, and is valuable in the way of popularising the idea of going to school."

Laws concluded on an optimistic note by remarking that "the great majority of those who are now members of our churches have been connected with our schools, and though some of these have failed to make much progress in their education, they are keenly alive to the necessity of having their children educated."⁹⁰

By 1895 Mission education may thus be said to have taken root in Nyasaland. The established missions were in a position both to consolidate their bases and to expand their spheres of influence. The Administration's pacification of the slavers at both ends of the Lake had coincided with an acceptance in principle of education by the Central and the Northern Ngoni.⁹¹ Suspicion and apathy on the part of the older generation of Africans was rapidly being overcome.

The establishment of the Overtoun Institute⁹² by

⁹⁰ Shepperson Collection: Confidential Memorandum by Laws regarding the organization and development of the Livingstonia Mission; dated 1892.

⁹¹ See Elmslie, op. cit.

⁹² Named for James White, Lord Overtoun, in recognition of his extensive financial contributions over the years toward the support of the Livingstonia Mission.

the Livingstonia Mission that same year may be taken as a symbol of a general feeling of confidence in the future as well as a major event in its own right. The choice of a site had eventually fallen upon the Kondowe Plateau.

Rising abruptly from the lakeshore to a height of over 4,000 feet, it was located midway between the Mission's previous headquarters at Bandawe and its out-station at Karonga near the northwest corner of the Lake.⁹³

It might be noted that Kondowe had not been included on the "short-list" prepared by Laws in the course of his 1892 Memorandum. Its selection may have been influenced to some extent by the ability of the Livingstonia Mission through its representatives upon the Board of the African Lakes Corporation to persuade the British South Africa Company to make a grant of the necessary land, for although Laws' biographer states that the site was selected with a view to establishing the Institution "as far away from the white settler community as possible,"⁹⁴ this interpretation is scarcely borne out by the facts. To begin with, on the assumption that the site finally chosen would lie within the very considerable area within which the Mission had previously maintained operations, this would by definition

⁹³ See Map 1.

⁹⁴ Livingstone, op. cit., p. 258.

preclude the only area of substantial European settlement. This area, comprising much of the Shire Highlands, was by common consent regarded as the sphere of the Blantyre Mission. Moreover, while it is true to say that Laws recognized the dangers inherent in the fostering of a class of deracinated Africans which might become a rootless lumpen-proletariat, he realized that if he wished to create a modern, self-sufficient society in the north, contacts with the more Europeanized south would inevitably increase as time went by for economic reasons if for no other.

Interestingly enough, Laws at this point enjoyed a considerable measure of support from the European community in contrast to the friction then developing between the latter and the Blantyre Mission.⁹⁵ Harry Johnston modestly delivered himself of the verdict that "Dr. Laws should justly be regarded as the greatest man who has yet appeared in Nyasaland."⁹⁶ At about the same time Lord Overtoun in writing to the B.S.A.'s administrator, Major Forbes, in connection with the Company's grant of land to Livingstonia made reference to the attitudes of Cecil Rhodes "who," he

⁹⁵ It is perhaps possible to speculate that in the view of the European community generally, "distance lent enchantment." See Hanna, Beginnings and Ross, Foundations for differing insights into the relationships between the Scottish Missions and the European community at large.

⁹⁶ Morrison, op. cit., p. 12.

observed, "we are well aware, is fully alive to the important bearing which the training and educating of the young men of Nyasaland must have on the development of Central Africa."⁹⁷ Finally, the official British Central African Gazette commented favourably on the advantages to be anticipated from the proposed Institution noting that "Apart from the great possibilities which such an Institution will open up for the natives themselves, its establishment will be welcome to all employers of labour in this country who have, up to the present time, found it almost impossible to obtain anything which could be called 'skilled labour.'"⁹⁸

But, before discussing the form that the Overtoun Institution took in its initial years, it might be useful to examine the broader aspects of educational development at this time. No longer were the missions preoccupied almost exclusively with attempting to persuade the various peoples among whom they worked to take an interest in even the most vestigial attempts at education. Neither did the missionaries now need to keep a weather eye upon the anti-Christian, and therefore anti-educational, activities of the slavers. Rather, the Missions now felt themselves to

⁹⁷NLS: 7873, from a letter from Overtoun to Forbes dated November 19th, 1897.

⁹⁸NLS: 7906, from the British Central Africa Gazette dated December 14th, 1894.

be in a position to consider their educational aims and methods in a rather more analytical and sophisticated way than had previously seemed feasible. To this end a spate of articles appeared in the Journals published regularly by the three main missions.⁹⁹ These articles gave evidence of much thoughtful and in many ways imaginative reflection upon the directions African education might take. Although the Missions did not always agree with one another's specific practices, they would most likely have accepted Professor Oliver's statement to the effect that they "had not so much to drive out the old Gods . . . as to temper, by industrial and religious education, a social and economic revolution inexorably pressing in from the outside."¹⁰⁰ The question was, how best to cope with this revolution?

Generalizations tend to be invidious but, broadly speaking, it seems fair to say that the UMCA and the DRC

⁹⁹ These were: for the Livingstonia Mission, Aurora; for the UMCA, the Nyasa News; and for the Blantyre Mission, Life & Work in British Central Africa. Copies of these periodicals are now very rare. Perhaps the most complete holdings of the three for the pre-World War I period are those of the Malawi National Archives, supplemented in the case of Aurora by the University of Malawi Library and in the case of L & W by privately-held copies at the CCAP Mission station in Blantyre. Copies are also to be found in loose, bound, and microfilm form at the NLS, the EU, EH and in the Shepperson Collection.

¹⁰⁰ Oliver, Missionary Factor, p. 16.

tended to emphasize the evangelical aspects of their teaching while the two Scottish missions favoured an approach that enabled two streams to develop side by side; the one "industrial" or vocational, the other "literary" or academic. Pupils in their schools were directed into that stream in which their best talents seemed to lie on the basis of their achievements in the course of their previous primary schooling.

Implicit in this divergence of opinion were opposing conceptions as to the educative potential of the African both in the long term and within the space of a single generation. It is here that the backgrounds of the representatives of these missions seem to be relevant.

On the one hand, there were the representatives of the UMCA and the DRC; both, in separate ways, conservative and paternalistic. They were, for the most part, respectively the products of the English upper-middle class with its established Public School traditions, and the sons of Boer farmers. These last might be less privileged in their upbringing but they were equally secure in a knowledge of their place in the scheme of things and equally certain of the unbridgeable gulf that separated them socially if not spiritually from those to whom they ministered.

And then there were the Scottish missionaries. Whether University graduates or skilled artisans with a modicum of formal schooling, they were the products of a mid-Victorian Calvinist ethos and all which that implied. The Livingstonia missionaries in particular brought with them attitudes "developed among the suppressed industrial proletariat of Scottish cities and deeply coloured by the social policy of Thomas Chalmers and his disciples."¹⁰¹ They were self-made men, many of whom knew from personal experience the hardships and self-discipline necessary to tread the path from humble croft and illiteracy to the possession of acquired skills, practical or professional. What is more important, they believed that this path might be trod by all, irrespective of their antecedents, if only they possessed the necessary talent and perseverance.

A cogent expression of this philosophy was written at this time by D. C. Scott, drawing upon his experience of over a decade and a half in the country.

People will not believe [he wrote] how much the African is capable of until they have tried. Our aim is always to teach responsibility and at the proper time to lay it on those who are to bear it. In many ways that time has come now. It is a fatal mistake to keep the African in leading strings. We cannot too soon teach him to realize that he has a part to play in the education and life of Christ's

¹⁰¹ McCracken, "Livingstonia as an Industrial Mission," p. 82.

church and kingdom. The more he realizes this the greater his progress will be.¹⁰²

It is possible, of course, to make too much of the very real divergencies that existed among the several missionary approaches to African education. It was, for instance, a representative of the UMCA who first suggested the drawing up of a common Educational Code as well as the creation of an "Educational Institute of British Central Africa."¹⁰³ Nevertheless, A. C. Murray of the DRC summed up this difference of approach in his closing address to the first Nyasaland United Missionary Conference.

We differ from each other because of our upbringing, because of our points of view, because of the special circumstances in which we have been and are placed. Can we wonder when men brought up in the British Isles, in Germany . . . and in South Africa, meet to discuss missionary methods that there will be differences of opinion? It would almost be unfortunate if it were otherwise. It is by striking steel and flint together that sparks are produced. It is by the different and contrasting notes in music that harmony is produced. For instance some of us think that the common cause can best be advanced by teaching some European language as soon as possible, others believe that most good can be done by, for the present, educating the natives only in their own language. Some believe that the Native Church will be most benefitted by a highly educated native ministry, others think that the time for that has not yet come and

¹⁰² Ross, "Foundations," p. 113, citing L & W for June, 1895.

¹⁰³ Zomba: Nyasa News No. 8, for May, 1895.

that it is still dangerous at the present stage to place the native pulpit too high above the pew. . . . We differ on the subject as to whether the time has come that the Government should undertake or even support the education of the natives of this land; and so too, we differ on many minor points of missionary method and policy. And yet, with what harmony we have met!¹⁰⁴

The Overtoun Institution

During the early months of 1895 a tentative beginning was made towards the construction of an educational "Institution" on the Kondowe plateau by members of the Livingstonia Mission. First classified an "Observing Station," a start was made with the erection of a number of small, temporary buildings. Experiments were conducted in order to ascertain the suitability of the area for pasturage and the potential of various seed crops. The number of African residents to begin with was small, the site itself previously having been virtually uninhabited. Nonetheless, an elementary school for the handful of children present and evening classes in English for the apprentices in the workshops were started in the spring.

In May a meeting of the Mission Council was held and the members present "heartily agreed to [Kondowe]

¹⁰⁴ Report of the First United Missionary Conference of Nyasaland; held at Livingstonia in October, 1900, p. 74.

being chosen as the site for the Institution." Laws admitted that "some advantages we desired are not to be got here," but concluded that "the combination of advantages offered by this locality is probably as great as is likely to be found elsewhere." He added that "When the negotiations for acquiring the desired land are completed, the permanent buildings of the Institution can be gone on with."¹⁰⁵

The work now went forward rapidly. In July, Rev. James Henderson took over responsibility for the school.¹⁰⁶ Previously, the teaching had been handled by Mrs. Laws.¹⁰⁷ In addition, an elementary school was conducted in the vernacular by Charles Domingo for about 30 pupils.¹⁰⁸ These included adult workers as well as children from the neighbouring villages.

Facilities were still very primitive. Classes initially were held in a reed hut. There was virtually no classroom equipment to begin with and much of the day was devoted to manual labour directed at improving the physical condition of the station. Equipment had been ordered from

¹⁰⁵ Shepperson Collection; Half-Yearly Report of the Livingstonia Mission for January-June, 1894; pp. 15-18. The negotiations referred to were with the British South Africa Company.

¹⁰⁶ Henderson was a graduate of Edinburgh University and had in addition studied at the Moray House Teacher Training College in that city.

¹⁰⁷ CS; from the Overtoun Institute Diary. Entry for July 22nd, 1895.

¹⁰⁸ For a fuller treatment of Domingo, See Chapter IV.

Britain, however, including a printing press which arrived in October. By the end of the year the boys studying telegraphy were making "steady progress not only in the manipulation of the instruments but also in the English education so much needed for any advance in such work."¹⁰⁹

From the start, pupils were sent to Kondowe from the various stations. Laws returned from Bandawe in November with nineteen. Ten pupils specially selected from Njuyu Station in Ngoniland arrived the following month in addition to one from Blantyre. With the arrival in January of three more from Bandawe and one from Hara in Ngoniland, and the admission of ten local pupils in March, the first school year ended with a total attendance of forty-six. Classes for girls were started simultaneously and were taught by Miss L. A. Stewart who was transferred for the purpose in November from the Mission's main station in Ngoniland, Ekwendeni.

The students were divided between what were termed a Boys' Upper School, a Girls' Upper School and a Junior Mixed School. From the first, English was the medium of instruction in the two Upper Schools. Henderson explained this policy as being "not only for the benefit of those

¹⁰⁹ Shepperson Collection: Half-Yearly Report of the Livingstonia Mission for July-December, 1895, pp. 17-18.

actually under instruction . . . but also for future entrants, that in coming here they may find themselves among an English-speaking community, where English may be heard in the workshops and playgrounds as well as in the schools." As to the level of work in the Boys' Upper School, Henderson reported that "The attainments of the pupils may be roughly classified by saying that half of the number has just entered upon what would be reckoned standard rank in a government school at home, while the other half would fairly be expected to emerge from the standards in a year or so."¹¹⁰ For the next five years the work continued to progress. From an educational standpoint, the chief goal of the Institution was the production of a body of African teachers sufficiently qualified as to enable the work of the Mission to expand.

As the Institution became established and an awareness of its existence spread, greatly increased demands were made for entry into its various courses. Throughout the year, but especially in June when the new academic year commenced, young men and boys would appear at the Institution, singly and in small groups, seeking admission. Some had traveled for weeks on foot, often through areas infested with lion and other predatory animals, in the hope

¹¹⁰Ibid., pp. 18-20.

of achieving an education.

Understandably, the Mission's policy was to give prior claim to those products of its own expanding educational network whose early academic promise had singled them out for further education. Nevertheless, the limitations imposed by lack of funds, of staff, and of accommodation, were a source of distress to Laws. As he commented, "it is hard to see thirty or forty eager young faces waiting for an answer as to whether they are to be allowed to enter or are to be sent away, and to know that this answer may likely prove a turning point in their lives."¹¹¹ The staff, and indeed the senior students did what they could. Referring to the latter, Henderson wrote in 1898 that

It is hardly possible to give them more credit than they deserve. They give from 4½ to 5 hours work every day as pupil teachers in return for their own instruction. This is too long, and the present school day which begins at 6:15 am and ends at 8:00 or 8:30 pm is of an absurd and deplorable length. But the arrangement is only temporary, occasioned by the great preponderance of pupils in the lower stages over those in the higher; and while the necessity for it is to be regretted, it is matter for pleasure and hopefulness, that the seniors have responded so well to the need.¹¹²

¹¹¹ Shepperson Collection: Report of the Livingstonia Mission, 1898-1899, p. 3.

¹¹² Shepperson Collection: Report of the Livingstonia Mission, 1897-1898, p. 7.

At the end of August in 1897 during the vacation period that separated the Institution's Short and Long Sessions, a so-called "Continuation School" was opened for the benefit of teachers working at the Mission's other stations. There were, to begin with, considerable inequalities of age and academic attainment among the 41 teachers attending, but on the whole the School appears to have had a stimulating effect contributing, by its provision of a common meeting point, an opportunity for the discussion of mutual problems. The following year a system of examinations was inaugurated which led to the granting of Teachers' Certificates. In the first year of its operation eight of the Bandawe acting teachers passed successfully.¹¹³

As to teacher training at the Institution itself, the original Upper School for boys had given way by 1897 to a Middle School which comprised Standards I, II, and III and a Normal School that included Standards IV, V and VI. Graduates of the latter would sit for a Teacher Probationer's Certificate before taking up their first teaching post. If successful, they would embark upon a period of probation generally lasting for from two to three years at the

¹¹³ CS: from the Overtoun Institute Diary. Entries for 1897 and 1898. Also see Shepperson Collection: Livingstonia Annual Reports for 1897-1898, p. 5, and 1898-1899, p. 4.

satisfactory completion of which the teacher received his schoolmaster's certificate. These last were in turn divided into a number of classes in order to reflect the level of competence attained.

A useful adjunct to the Normal Department was the village school opened at Ruatizi and located only a few miles from the Institution proper on the Kondowe plateau. There, prospective teachers under European guidance could familiarize themselves with the conditions that they would presumably encounter in their future work.

Serving as the pinnacle of Livingstonia's educational programme was the Theological Course, first started with a class of four in December, 1897. Henderson and Laws shared the teaching of Old and New Testament Introduction, Exegesis and Systematic Theology. During the vacation periods the students accompanied their instructors on evangelistic tours through neighbouring districts. The problem of their "insufficient acquaintance with English" was one with which these first prospective ministers grappled constantly. For their part, Laws and Henderson were content that their students develop strong characters. Academically, the missionaries accepted the premise that "what they accomplish will be less than may be fairly

expected from those who will follow them."¹¹⁴

In a sense at the other end of the scholastic ladder was the Evening School. This proved a great success; so much so, that it was commented that "Young men are now [in 1898] taking lengthy engagements in the employment of the Mission to attend it."¹¹⁵ Here the students ranged in age from adolescents to men well into middle age. "Learning is no longer easy for them; but their enthusiasm and perseverance are wonderful." Strenuous attempts were made to create an atmosphere conducive to learning; a "bright, well-lighted school-room . . . maps and pictures on the walls," a general "orderliness of things." Admittedly, the highest goal was a reasonable degree of literacy in the vernacular but in Henderson's view, "they are taking away more benefit than school learning."¹¹⁶

But for all of those who made the steep climb to the plateau in search of an education there were problems as well. Physically the Institution was not yet complete and the unfinished buildings coupled with the rigours of what

¹¹⁴CS: from the Overtoun Institute Diary.
Entry for 1898.

¹¹⁵Presumably at least some among these young men had failed to gain admission to the Institute proper as full-time students.

¹¹⁶Shepperson Collection: Report of the Livingstonia Mission, 1897-1898, p. 6.

was to many an unfamiliar climate, thanks to the elevation of the site, combined to produce conditions of hardship for pupils, apprentices and labourers alike. Moreover, a formidable list of deterrents could be drawn up against which the student's determination must be proof. The discipline to which he had to submit was strict. The timetable's requirements for classes, study periods and manual labour left him little free time. He remained for most of the year cut off from family and friends, and when he did return for a short holiday to his village it was often only to be faced with "the insidious discouragement" and sometimes the "active opposition" of those at home.¹¹⁷

Greatly though the demand for places at the Institution outran their availability, it did not as yet follow that respect for education had permeated the community as a whole; at least, not to anything like the degree it was to do in the years to come.

The "Industrial Missions"

Soon after the declaration of a Protectorate over Nyasaland, the first of the so-called Industrial Missions entered the country. These Missions aimed at achieving economic self-sufficiency as rapidly as possible. Their

¹¹⁷MU: Aurora, Vol. 5, No. 27 (August, 1901), pp. 29-31.

goal was the creation of a Christian African staff of evangelists, artisans and master farmers. Doctrinally these missions tended to be fundamentalist in approach. Generally they were non-denominational, although Protestant. The establishment of these missions was due largely to the enthusiasm and persuasiveness of one extraordinary man, Joseph Booth.¹¹⁸

The first of these missions to enter Nyasaland was the Zambezi Industrial Mission in 1892. It was administered from offices in the East End of London and aimed at economic self-sufficiency together with evangelisation on as wide a scale as possible. Educational work in terms of the ZIM's policy, as opposed perhaps to Booth's personal interpretation of it, was seen almost wholly as a necessary adjunct to spreading the Gospel. From the opening of the first school, conducted on the verandah of Booth's house at the Mission's Mitsidi headquarters five miles from Blantyre, the emphasis was on "familiarizing the natives with habits of industry and [bringing] them the Gospel."¹¹⁹

¹¹⁸ Booth's role will be discussed at greater length in Chapter IV. For the definitive treatment of his career in Nyasaland, see George Shepperson and Thomas Price, Independent African, John Chilembwe and the Origins, Setting and Significance of the Nyasaland Native Rising of 1915 (Edinburgh, 1958). Also, for a personal reminiscence written by Booth's daughter, see Emily Booth Langworthy, This Africa Was Mine (Stirling, 1952).

¹¹⁹ Rep. Ed. Dept., 1931, p. 24. For further background, see Langworthy, op. cit.

In both, considerable success was achieved.

For the first few years considerable sums were raised in Great Britain "to establish and equip"¹²⁰ a number of stations. By 1898 there were some thirty English missionaries in the field and in the same year, for the first time the Mission's plantations produced a modest income. The main crop during this period was coffee, at the ZIM as well as elsewhere throughout those areas of European settlement scattered across the Shire Highlands. To dramatize their success, the Mission sent to Queen Victoria a twenty-pound box containing samples representing the four stages in the coffee's preparation. This received prompt acknowledgment with Her Majesty's thanks, noting that "The gift is all the more interesting as an evidence of the progress made under the auspices of the Zambozi Industrial Mission."¹²¹

On the educational side the ZIM's early accomplishments were modest. The Mission associated itself, however, with the educational aims of the Federated Missions, largely determined by the Scots at Livingstonia and Blantyre.

¹²⁰ From an anonymously written and undated pamphlet entitled The Zambozi Industrial Mission, p. 2. Probably printed circa 1930.

¹²¹ NLS: 7906, from The Christian for December 15th, 1898.

The ZIM was followed in 1895 by the Baptist Industrial Mission. The BIM was administered from Glasgow and centred its activities around Nchou in Ngoni-dominated country some eighty miles to the northwest of Blantyre.¹²² In 1898 the Nyasa Industrial Mission commenced operations at Likubula near Blantyre. A school was started at once "for the teaching of scripture and the three Rs as a necessary part of the work." A further school was started in the same year on the NIM's agricultural estate near Cholo, twenty miles to the south. This latter school initially met "daily from 12:30 pm to 2:15 pm in order to allow estate workers to attend during the mid-day rest." Education continued upon a modest scale, following the lines laid down by the Federated Missions, until 1905 when a Training Institute or Industrial School was organized at Cholo.¹²³

In the establishment of both of the above, Booth played a leading part, as he did subsequently with the initial organization in Nyasaland of both the Seventh Day Baptist and Seventh-day Adventist Missions. Both of these

¹²² PRO: CO/525, No. 66 - Nyasaland 1916 - Vol. 1, Dispatches; 1st January to 7th February. This includes among other material, the testimony both oral and written given before the Commission appointed to enquire into the background of the Chilembwe Rising in 1915. See Sources for further detail. The evidence referred to here is from the testimony given by Alexander Smith of the BIM. See also Shepperson & Price, op. cit.

¹²³ Rep. Ed. Dept., 1931, p. 22.

commenced operations as well in the country's Southern Province.

In 1901 the "Plainfield Mission"¹²⁴ of the Seventh Day Baptists, comprising a 2,000 acre estate, was sold to the Seventh-day Adventists. Booth arranged the transaction but was soon superseded in authority at Plainfield by the Rev. Thomas Branch, an American Negro minister appointed by the Seventh-day Adventist Mission Board in the United States. Booth continued to work with him for a time in a subordinate capacity. The official history of the SDA Mission recounts the commencement of educational work in the following illuminating passage.

Naturally, Mr. Branch carefully looked around to discover how the older missionary societies carried on their work. It was very evident that the Africans in those days were quite indifferent to religion, but were keenly interested in securing an education. . . . Mr. Branch soon came to see that he also would have to establish a school. But where could he get teachers? At first he did not know the vernacular. He needed someone to help him learn the language, and through whom he could preach the message to the people. So he hired some teachers who had been trained by other societies and were willing to work for him. Word was sent out, and the school began.¹²⁵

¹²⁴"So named after the Baptist Headquarters in Plainfield, Illinois." For this, see V. E. Robinson, "History of Nyasaland Union of S.D.A." (Seventh-day Adventists) unpublished typescript, 1952, p. 5. Soon through courtesy of the Seventh-day Adventist Mission headquarters in Blantyre, Malawi.

¹²⁵Ibid., p. 6.

For the first five years, schoolwork was confined to the Plainfield Station itself. There were generally between twenty and thirty students in residence at a time. Many did not stay long, remaining a week or two and then disappearing in the night. Robinson writes that "Only the most determined survived" and this is understandable as

. . . the programme at the Mission was a strenuous one. . . . Long before daylight the bugle sounded rousing the boys from their slumbers. Early morning prayers followed, and by the time the first faint streaks of day were visible, the boys were hard at work in the farm lands. Not until the sun was well up in the sky did the bugle sound again calling the boys to morning food. During the heat of the day classes were conducted, many of them outdoors until the rude mud and pole school building could be erected. More work followed in the afternoon, then supper and the weary students lay down to rest shortly after dark. Small wonder the boys called their school 'Egypt' for many years. There was no talk of school fees in those days. In fact Mr. Branch followed the common practice of other mission societies of paying the boys three shillings per month to work on the farm and attend school.¹²⁶

The above seems to have been fairly typical of these Industrial Missions. The difference between receiving pay, however meagre it may appear to the contemporary eye, as opposed to the increasingly prevalent fee-paying policies adopted by the more established missions, was decisive for many of the students. It should be borne in mind that very

¹²⁶ Ibid., p. 7.

many of these were not young boys but grown men in their very late teens or early twenties. Many of them had wives and family responsibilities and all had the need to find cash for payment of their Government tax.

The arrival finally should be noted of the small South Africa General Mission which established itself in 1900 in territory otherwise unoccupied by missions in the extreme southwest of the Lower Shire District at Lulwo, within a mile or two of Nyasaland's southern border with Mozambique. While village schoolwork was commenced at once, the primary function of the Mission can be seen from the following statement written some thirty years later by a member of the SAGM.

At no time has the aim of the Mission been educational. The programme of education has always been reckoned subsidiary to the main purpose, and hence has never been developed beyond the purpose for which it is immediately useful in enabling the people to read the word of God for themselves and to write; and the present aim [in 1931] is still the production of teacher-evangelists, rather than of teachers in the accepted sense.¹²⁷

The U.M.C.A. in the 1890's

As has been noted, the UMCA was forced to operate under considerable difficulties prior to the pacification of their sphere of mission activity by the Administration in the mid-1890's. Not until 1893 did a European teacher

¹²⁷ Rep. Ed. Dept., 1931, p. 22.

assume control of their central station school at Likoma. Previously the teaching had been conducted by "trained native lads from Zanzibar under the supervision of one or another of the clergy."¹²⁸ Prior to 1895 between 40 and 50 boys had been resident as students at any one time. They came from the environs of the southern half of the eastern lakeshore. A handful of the more promising had been dispatched to the Mission's headquarters at Zanzibar for further schooling on condition that they teach for a minimum of two years at Likoma upon their return.

The school at Likoma met for some 5½ hours a day, 5 days a week. This constituted a greater than average number of contact hours over the school year, but a drawback was the general use of Swahili rather than Chinyanja as the language of instruction. The reason given was the lack of adequate reading materials in Chinyanja but a further factor was probably the initial dependence of the Mission upon their Zanzibar headquarters for the provision of teachers.

The aims and orientation of the teaching may be judged from the following extract from the Mission's journal, the Nyasa News. It should be borne in mind that at this

¹²⁸ Zomba: Nyasa News No. 3, for February, 1894, p. 81.

stage the highest goal attainable from an academic as opposed to a vocational point of view was the achievement of functional literacy.

Our highest aim in educating the boys is to fit as many as we can for the position of teachers and evangelists when they go out from us. Meanwhile however, a very large number of the lads who are taught in our school are obviously unfitted for such occupation, even after some years spent in the school; though these are by no means lazy or unfitted for all work. Several trades, notably printing and carpentering, have afforded scope for the employment of a good number of our superannuated schoolboys, and it has been our practice to apprentice as many as have shown themselves deserving, to one or other of these departments of work. Yet no boy has ever been allowed to begin on either of these trades until he has learned to read with fair fluency, and to write a legible hand in the school.¹²⁹

Taking the foregoing as representative of what had already been accomplished by the UMCA, what were her plans for the future? These were set forth in a pair of articles, each of about 2,500 words in length, and both published in the Nyasa News in the early months of 1895. They may be regarded as noteworthy for providing a reminder that the UMCA was not wholly wedded to a conception of education which regarded it merely as a necessary adjunct to the "saving of souls."

The first article commenced with an acknowledgment of the influences that contribute to the education of an

¹²⁹Ibid., pp. 82-84.

individual quoting John Stuart Mill to the effect that "Whatever helps to shape the human being . . . is part of his Education." The advantages of the teacher were stressed in terms of his opportunities for influencing the individual as a pupil. Use of the same building for both Church and School was severely criticized on the grounds that these buildings were generally designed for use solely as churches.¹³⁰ The lack of proper school equipment was deplored. After painting a verbal picture of the ideal teaching situation, the writer noted with some irony that "From this we return to the four mud walls of our 'school' here in which there may be a desk which has been evolved from a provision box; a dozen forms, noble in simplicity of design, and marvellously conceived with an eye to the greatest degree of discomfort; a few pieces of slate and fragments of books, a blackboard (if there is one at all) which is quite innocent of black."¹³¹

Ways in which the more glaring of these lacks might be remedied locally with a little ingenuity and at minimal

¹³⁰ This criticism possessed a certain validity for most of the other missions operating in Nyasaland at the time at which it was written. Indeed, it still holds true today in the case of many primary schools scattered throughout present-day Malawi, and in numerous cases visited by the writer.

¹³¹ Zomba: Nyasa News No. 7, for February, 1895, pp. 222-226.

expense were outlined in some detail before considering the possibility of an Educational Code. The limitations upon its effectiveness inherent in the voluntary nature of education in Nyasaland were acknowledged. Nevertheless, after requesting those readers representing other missions to come forward with suggestions, the writer had this to say:

Hitherto we have all been working each in his own corner without reference to each other. . . . We have here a vast waste of power. Our aim is common, the needs of the people are common. We may deal with different tribes with varying characteristics but school work as a whole is the same all the world over and we fight a common ignorance. Why not let us combine our forces . . . [bringing] all the experience of those who have seen years of such work in Africa to the aid of those fresh to the field; and the enthusiasm of the newcomers to the encouraging of the experienced? . . . Why not have an Educational Institute of British Central Africa?¹³²

Brave words, but as events were to demonstrate, not entirely representative of the weight of thinking within the Mission as a whole.

The second article dealt for the most part with practical and down-to-earth suggestions for a syllabus somewhat broader than that of the three R's. Noting that the UMCA had traditionally devoted one-quarter of its school hours to religious instruction, the importance of musical drill was stressed, together with that of "Drawing,

¹³² Zomba: Nyasa News, No. 8, for May, 1895, pp. 248-254.

especially geometrical because of its utility in building, carpentry work, etc."

Finally, the question of a broader range of subjects was discussed.

Geography certainly [should be taught] but beginning with the particular district in which the school is situated, a ground plan of the school is the first geography lesson always, gradually working on the synthetic method, enlarge the sphere till a knowledge of Africa has been acquired, then, and not till then, take in the other continents and proceed backwards on the analytic method. Our experience has been that the pupils take readily to Geography. History must be very carefully taught. British History in the usual acceptation of the term we would not teach at all. Biographies of illustrious men of all times and of all countries are much more valuable. The various kinds of Government in different countries and how they have evolved, the making and enforcing of laws, the theory of taxation might be taught with advantage minus their cobweb covering of wars and battles and dates. Science, but let it be very thorough and systematic whether Physiology, Botany, Geology, or any other. Let us have no dabbling, no superficial smattering, rather make no attempt at it at all. A knowledge of the processes of the various manufactures and industries of civilization might be given in the form of an object lesson, and in this, as in most of our teaching, the Magic Lantern should play a prominent part.¹³³

¹³³ Ibid. This last quotation is of particular interest in that the principles they enunciate were re-echoed over 40 years later by the late Dr. J. G. Stoytler of the DRC in the course of his doctoral dissertation for Cornell University, subsequently published as Educational Adaptations with Reference to African Village Schools with Special Reference to Central Nyasaland (London, 1939).

Summary

It may be seen, therefore, that while overall the Livingstonia and Blantyre Missions deserve a certain emphasis throughout this formative period, by the turn of the century some eight to ten missions had been established throughout the country. Articles such as those cited above served to reflect the thinking of the more progressive elements. At the same time, schoolwork at a very elementary level continued to expand, quietly and systematically, in all parts of the Protectorate. While the standards of academic attainment both aimed at and realized throughout this decade of the nineties varied considerably, the groundwork had been laid for the concerted attempts at coordination and improvement that were soon to come.

CHAPTER II

A DECADE OF CONSULTATION, 1900-1910

Educational development in Nyasaland throughout the first decade of this century was marked by a gradual but steady consolidation of the work of the major missions, together with determined attempts at coordinating their work throughout the Protectorate. This effort encompassed an informal delineation of "spheres of influence" or mission "fields" among the more important Protestant missions as well as the search for agreement on curricula, syllabi, teaching qualifications, etc. Much of this effort was concentrated in or stemmed from three conferences convened during this decade in 1900, 1904 and 1910, at which much time was given over to a consideration of educational questions.

The 1900 Conference

The year 1900 marked the "Semi-Jubilee" of the Livingstonia Mission. To celebrate this twenty-fifth anniversary a Conference was convened at Kondowe to which representatives were invited from all the Christian missions then operating in Nyasaland. Blantyre and the DRC were well represented among the delegates as was the host mission.

Of the two small industrial missions, the Zambezi Industrial Mission was represented while the Baptist Industrial Mission was unable to send a delegate. Neither was the UMCA; but Laws later wrote that both missions had expressed themselves as being "in complete sympathy with the objects of the conference."¹ Observers were present from the Berlin Mission, the London Missionary Society and the Moravian Mission; all three of which were operating along Nyasaland's northern periphery.

Education was but one of a number of subjects discussed during the eight-day conference.² A full day, however, was devoted to its examination. Two of the points at issue concerned the content of school curricula and the relationship of education to evangelisation. Differences of opinion appeared to be fairly clearly drawn along denominational lines; essentially, the Scottish missions versus the rest.

The Scottish viewpoint was put forward by Henderson of Livingstonia who stated that Africans coming under the influence of the various missions should not be treated

¹ Shepperson Collection: Livingstonia Report for 1900, p. 1.

² Other topics included Evangelistic Work, Organization of the Native Church, Medical Mission Work, Christian Vernacular Literature, and Women's Work.

merely as "spiritual salvage."³ He emphasized missionary responsibility for the means whereby "in process of time they [the Africans] may become possessed of the advantages . . . which we ourselves enjoy." Henderson added that "The adoption of this principle would make our education very broad," and "would leave no room for discussion as to the use of English." Rev. Hetherwick in his paper agreed that it was "a good policy to teach English as widely as possible."⁴ The two speakers also agreed on the value of manual training or industrial education. Henderson expressed the opinion that "there should be no higher education without an equivalent, thoroughly practical, manual training carried on day after day alongside it." Hetherwick felt that "we cannot place too high a value . . . on industrial education of the natives. . . . It should proceed as far as possible alongside his intellectual education."

The arguments in favor of simpler education were put forward obliquely and directly. Rev. R. Blake of the DRC affirmed that "There was not at present sufficient work

³The Nyasaland United Missionary Conference: Report of the Meetings Held at the Livingstonia Missionary Institution, British Central Africa, October 12-20, 1900 (Livingstonia, British Central Africa, 1901). Paper by the Chairman of the Conference on Educational Work, Rev. James Henderson, M.A., pp. 47-51. Hereinafter referred to as 1900 Conference.

⁴Ibid. Paper by the Rev. A. Hetherwick, pp. 51-52. Italics mine.

in the villages to engage fully the time of either the evangelist or the teacher."⁵ Rev. C. Schumann of the Berlin Mission⁶ commented more forthrightly that "All missionaries of his mission placed preaching first and schools next," adding that "Preaching was the best for the heathen" and that as far as his mission was concerned their belief lay "only in the power of the Gospel."⁷

During subsequent discussions the question was formally raised of active Government involvement in education. In March, 1898, the Blantyre Mission had requested a Government grant to help finance technical training. It had been pointed out to Government that "printers, telegraphers, clerks, storekeepers and foremen all originated from Mission schools." Lt. Col. W. H. Manning, then the acting Commissioner, acknowledged this fact but had been afraid of setting a precedent that could be seized upon by other Mission Societies. He had, therefore, refused the requested assistance.⁸ The issue was now brought to the

⁵ Ibid., p. 53, in the course of a discussion on "Schools in Relation to the Church."

⁶ The Berlin Mission was then operating in the area just to the northeast of Lake Nyasa in what is today southern Tanzania.

⁷ 1900 Conference, p. 56, in the course of a discussion on educational "Ideals and Limitations."

⁸ EU: Central African TIMES, January 17th, 1903.

attention of the Conference by Henderson. Noting that in 1898 over 15,000 pupils were on the rolls of the Livingstonia Mission alone he submitted that elsewhere "Elementary education . . . is recognized today as properly a function of Government as much as the administration of justice."⁹ Hetherwick again concurred, affirming that "it is clearly the duty of Government to help," particularly in the light of "the enormous advantage the Government of the country will acquire from the education of the natives." Hetherwick was careful, nevertheless, to stipulate that "no such help could be conditioned by any hamperings of our religious education."¹⁰ In this he was seconded by Elmslie of Livingstonia, the Conference Chairman. The latter, while acknowledging that "It was the duty of the Government to aid [Mission] schools," added that "if the receiving of aid involved a departure from their principle that their schools were religious institutions . . . they must decline such aid."¹¹

A further result of the delegates' deliberations was the drafting of an Educational Code. This was

⁹ 1900 Conference, p. 49.

¹⁰ Ibid., p. 51.

¹¹ Ibid., p. 53, in the course of a discussion on "Schools in Relation to the State."

generally welcomed, although there was some difference of opinion as to just how workable in practice it might be. Livingstonia's representatives felt that the Code should be accepted as a standard. The Blantyre delegates on the other hand, felt that while it constituted an admirable ideal to which their mission might aspire, it was "too high" a standard under present conditions.¹² The Code was subsequently accepted in principle by several Missions although not formally promulgated until 1906 following its revision in the course of the 1904 Conference.¹³

The final question discussed was that of charging fees for school attendance. Again there was general agreement in principle on the value of fees as a means of establishing the worth of education; indeed, this aspect was regarded as of more importance than the system's value in increasing the amount of money available for expenditure upon schooling. The fact that in the initial stages the introduction of fees might produce a falling off in the number of pupils enrolled was acknowledged, but a note of caution was struck as to the timing of this introduction. The view was expressed that there must first be an

¹² Ibid., p. 52, in the course of a discussion on a "Common Educational Code."

¹³ See this chapter, "Results of the Second Missionary Conference."

interim period during which the peoples of the locality involved could come to see the practical advantages accruing from education.¹⁴ Thus the Conference concluded.

Viewed as a whole, a broad area of general agreement was evident in educational matters. Still, the time did not yet appear ripe for the establishment of genuine unity in educational practice. Regrettably, as more and more missions entered the field, not least the Roman Catholics, the chances of a voluntary unity would further recede. Government would eventually have to intervene; but that day awaited a deeper appreciation on its part of its basic responsibilities in this sphere of social action.

The Reentry of the Roman Catholics

In 1897 the Apostolic Vicariate of Nyasa comprising Nyasaland and North Eastern Rhodesia was established. Following a series of exploratory visits by representatives of the White Fathers in that year and in 1899, four mission stations were established by them in Nyasaland in 1903. They were Likuni sited near present-day Lilongwe, Mua in the Dedza district, Kacebere in the Fort Manning (Mchinji) district, and Nguludi just south of Limbe.

¹⁴1900 Conference, pp. 54-55, for a discussion on the "Support of Schools."

The missionaries staffing these fresh attempts had gained experience while working at the White Fathers' Bangweolo Mission in North Eastern Rhodesia. This had given them some familiarity with Bantu languages and with the general conditions they might expect to encounter at their new posts. Setting to work at once, within six months they had constructed temporary quarters for themselves in addition to a number of chapels and schools.

A further result of the exploratory surveys of 1897 and 1899 had been the decision of the leadership of the White Fathers in Central Africa, headed by Bishop Dupont, to invite their fellow Roman Catholic missionaries, the Montfort Marist Fathers, to join them in Nyasaland to share this large and comparatively densely populated area. The Marist Fathers answered this call with such alacrity that they preceded their colleagues into the field, establishing their initial station at Nzama in June, 1901. Their first step was to open a school for the training of catechists. Fifty pupils selected from the immediate neighbourhood were soon at work and within a short time the Mission was able to open many village schools in the vicinity, placing as religious teachers the pupils they had already trained. Religious was, however, the operative word, and the level and quality of the education offered

does not appear to have been particularly high.

In an effort to regularize their respective spheres of activity on a geographic basis, the Nguludi Station near Limbe was transferred from the control of the White Fathers to that of the Marists in 1904. The following year the White Fathers sent semi-trained African teachers to assume control of a number of out-schools for the first time. Classes at the Station schools continued to be conducted by European missionaries, predominantly French. Both Catholic missions were destined to develop rapidly in the course of the ensuing decade but, at the time the Second General Mission Conference was convened, their educational work was still in a formative state.¹⁵

Blantyre Developments

At Blantyre, Rev. David Clement Scott had been succeeded as head of the Mission by his colleague of long standing, Rev. Alexander Hetherwick. Educational work continued to develop with an emphasis still placed upon the boarding system. This was admittedly expensive, but it was felt that a "full control over [the pupils'] young lives" was "'the' thing necessary." The fact that living

¹⁵ Rep. Ed. Dept., 1931, pp. 19-20 and 23. Also, for a general, but somewhat more detailed treatment, see MRC: an unpublished typescript "History of the Montfort Marist Mission," in Nyasaland.

conditions for students at the Mission were totally different from those obtaining in their home villages was regarded as a positive good, particularly in terms of self-discipline and adherence to a regular schedule. As one of the missionaries remarked, "submission to our discipline is an excellent test, for those who survive it generally turn out well afterwards."¹⁶ The Mission did maintain a number of out-schools, twelve in 1902. However, in these, the avowed policy was simply to carry the pupils "just so far as to be able to read and write in their own language. When they attain to this, their education is finished."¹⁷ Finished, that is, unless they wished to come as boarders to the Blantyre Station, and provided that there was a place for them there. Referring to these out-schools, it was remarked that they "have never been as successful as one could wish, chiefly because of the want of efficient European supervision."¹⁸

Once admitted to the Station as a boarder, a student entered the Junior School. This included all pupils on the Station up to and including Standard 3 but was divided into two sections, Vernacular and Anglo-Vernacular. All pupils

¹⁶ Zomba: Life & Work in British Central Africa, September, 1902, p. 6.

¹⁷ Ibid., p. 8.

¹⁸ Ibid.

attended classes every morning from 8:30 until noon. In the afternoons they worked at a variety of tasks. Some of them were assigned to act as houseboys in the homes of European missionaries. Others among the younger pupils were occupied in sweeping, hoeing, and generally keeping the Station grounds neat and tidy. The older boys, those in Standards 1 to 3, helped out in the various Mission departments; the workshop, the print, or the store. After successfully completing the Junior School, the pupil wishing to continue his education further had to bind himself as an apprentice for a term of three years. This enabled the Mission to plan its educational programme with a foreknowledge of the numbers to be catered for in the several departments. The apprentices worked at mastering their chosen occupations throughout the mornings from 6:30 until noon. In the afternoons, between 2:00 and 5:00, they attended the Senior School comprising Standards 4 through 6 and taught entirely in English. At the end of their three-year course all Senior pupils sat an examination. On the basis of their performance, they received a Certificate indicating their level of achievement. Thus equipped they had little difficulty in acquiring employment in the Native Civil Service or with the European planting and business communities. A few graduates, including all

those who had trained as teachers, remained in the service of the Mission.¹⁹

The Blantyre Mission laid stress upon its attempts to parallel the primary education system in Scotland. The Anglo-Vernacular classes from Standards 1 to 3 were said to equal "approximately the same stage in the Scotch Code,"²⁰ indeed, "the only real difference . . . would be that instead of the rows of white faces which [the teacher] would see in school in Scotland, he would be confronted with line after line of shining black ones."²¹ For the Central Station at Blantyre, catering as it did to a very limited number of students in terms of the Mission's overall field, this statement was probably not too far from the truth. Certainly every effort was made to preserve the forms; the ringing of a school bell at intervals, the forming of ranks prior to filing into the classrooms, the timetable with its subjects "in due order," and the intervals or recesses for play out of doors.

At about this time the Blantyre Mission decided to follow Livingstonia's lead and introduce the principle

¹⁹The foregoing is largely drawn from an examination of numerous numbers of L & W covering the period 1901 to 1905. They have been seen at Zomba, NLS, EU, the Shepperson Collection, and privately held copies at the Blantyre Station of the C.C.A.P.

²⁰L & W, October, 1902.

²¹Ibid., January, 1903.

of fees for students at Station schools. It was noted somewhat wryly that "the immediate effect was to practically empty all the schools."²² Yet within a short time the students started to trickle back. It was reported from Zomba that the burden of a monthly fee, usually only a penny or so, "seems to make the classes the more attractive!"²³ The Blantyre Station itself introduced an entrance fee of 2/6 in 1902. Within a few months the Mission was able to record its satisfaction at the readiness with which payment was forthcoming, this in its view "showing that Education is really valued by a section of the people at least."²⁴

The decision to levy fees was justified on the grounds that "the conditions of the country are not the same as they were formerly . . . the native is in possession of some money," and that if the student has to pay a little for his education "he will value it all the more." It was added that although the Mission had "commenced with an Entrance fee only, . . . it is our intention at the first opportunity to draw up a scale of fees and charge accordingly."²⁵ By the end of 1904, it was laid down that on the Blantyre Station pupils studying in the vernacular

²² Ibid., November, 1902.

²³ Ibid., December, 1902.

²⁴ Ibid., January, 1903.

²⁵ Ibid.

would pay a fee of two shillings a year while those learning English would pay three shillings. This apparently by no means reduced the number of applicants for available places, and many prospective entrants were advised to continue their studies at the Stations or in their village schools until another opportunity presented itself of their applying to the Central School.

One alteration in the fee system was its waiving in the case of girls in an attempt to attract more of them to school. Particular concern was expressed by the Mission on this subject as they viewed the end result of female abstention from schooling, the inevitability of Christian boys or men marrying "heathen" women. This, felt the missionaries, would vitiate much of the good that the men's education had accomplished.²⁶

Increasingly as time went by, emphasis was placed upon the maintenance of sub-Stations in charge of trained African teachers. These were viewed as providing an essential link between the Central Station and the small village schools, and served to maintain the interest of promising youngsters in their schoolwork and to channel the best of them in due course to Blantyre. Although the Mission

²⁶Ibid., January, 1905.

attempted to maintain a policy of weekly visitation by a European missionary to these sub-Stations, it was nonetheless felt to be vital that the African in charge be a man of sufficient "strength of character to resist the influences of village life."²⁷

Results of the Second Missionary Conference

From an educational standpoint, the most significant achievement of the Second United Missionary Conference, held in Blantyre in October, 1904, was the decision taken to delegate responsibility to an Educational Board for the drawing up of a "common Educational Code and General Scheme of Education for the Protectorate."²⁸

A four-man Board was appointed to represent the member missions on what was essentially a geographical basis.²⁹ The Board, as constituted during the course of these deliberations, comprised Henderson of Livingstonia

²⁷ Ibid. These influences were apparently regarded as being retrograde and presumably included such temptations as beer drinking, dancing, and polygamy.

²⁸ As described in the letter conveyed by the Board to Commissioner Sharpe on May 25th, 1905. Cited in L & W, July-August, 1905.

²⁹ It had been suggested that provision be made for the possible representation on the Board of the London Missionary Society and of the several German missions operating in adjacent North Eastern Rhodesia and German East Africa. This suggestion, though received favourably by the Conference, was not in fact acted upon.

as Chairman, Hetherwick of Blantyre as Acting Secretary, W. H. Murray of the DRC and Hamilton of the ZEM. On May 20th, 1905, the Board met for five days of deliberations at the Blantyre Mission.

The Code they drew up dealt essentially with three subjects. These were: the Classification of Schools and Institutions; the Grading of teachers' qualifications; and the creation of the proper machinery in terms of school Inspection, Reports, etc., with a view to establishing a general uniformity of educational practice and satisfying Government that the financial aid for education requested by the Board would be used efficiently.³⁰

The Classification of Schools was accomplished by detailing the subjects to be taught and the end products to be aimed at. There were four classifications, each with its own code.

The Vernacular Code. This was intended for primary schools aimed at giving a thorough grounding in the native language and in it alone. In addition to Reading and Writing, elementary Arithmetic was included as well as Singing, Physical Drill, and the rudiments of local and general Geography.

³⁰ This description of the overall Educational Code is again drawn largely from copies of L & W appearing in the course of 1905.

The Anglo-Vernacular Lower School Code. While conducted primarily in the Vernacular, this Code included a course of instruction in English as far as Standard 3, in addition to more advanced study of those subjects included in the Vernacular Code. It was aimed at serving simultaneously as the Vernacular Normal School course for those students not intending to pursue their studies further but planning instead to return to teach in village schools, and as the preparatory course for both the Anglo-Vernacular Upper School and the full Normal Course.

The Anglo-Vernacular Upper School Code. This included further study of previously mentioned subjects in Standards 4 to 6. The level aimed at was that of comparable Standards under the then current Scottish and English Codes. Successful completion of these three Standards, in addition to a course in the art and practice of teaching, comprised the Anglo-Vernacular Normal School Course.

The Manual Code. This aimed at simultaneously training "the hand as well as the head" and included teaching in the rudiments of Carpentry, Bricklaying, Printing, Stonecutting and Building. These skills were to be studied together with the six Standards of the Anglo-Vernacular Codes. The Manual Code was to begin

in the lower Standards with instruction in local crafts such as pottery, basket and mat weaving, etc. In the upper Standards, the pupil would be introduced to the use of those tools commonly employed in Agriculture and in the various aspects of Building and Construction generally. This course was not intended to conflict with the regular system of apprenticeships, but rather to indicate the value of manual training generally.

In addition to these four Codes, a number of more specialized courses were envisaged. The first of these, and the only one of a purely literary nature, was an Arts Course intended to follow on from the two Anglo-Vernacular courses. It emphasized more advanced instruction in English and Mathematics and included the study of History. In addition to comprising an end in itself and possessing value in the preparation of teachers for the Central Station schools, it was regarded as an indispensable preliminary for the Theological Course. This last represented the pinnacle of African academic attainment as then envisaged and was to be provided only by two or three of the more educationally advanced missions for a carefully selected handful of mature students.

Provision was also made for a Medical Course for those who wished to qualify for the work of Hospital

Attendant or Medical Assistant in connection with the projected Government Department of Public Health, and for a Commercial Course for those wishing to become Native Clerks or Office Assistants. This latter course would be open only to students who had passed Standard 6 and would consist of a three-year period of instruction in Commercial English, Arithmetic, Indexing, Bookkeeping, Typewriting, and General Office and Store-work.

As regards the various industries involving technical skills, the Board decided to leave the details of their respective apprenticeship schemes to the individual missions concerned. The Board specified only that the period of apprenticeship must be for a minimum of three years, that instruction be given only by trained Europeans, and that after successfully completing the course the apprentice be given a certificate by his Mission stating the length of his apprenticeship and the qualifications he had achieved. Lastly, the Board made provision for a course of Industrial Training for women and girls to include instruction in needlework, laundering, cooking and general housework as well as practise in comparable indigenous skills.

The members of the Board then turned their attention to the question of teacher qualifications. Their

conclusion was that all teachers should be graded on the basis of their training, Vernacular or Anglo-Vernacular, and according to whether they had received a Normal School training or had merely qualified as acting teachers by passing an examination to be given under the Code. The Normal Course referred to was to include three years training at a mission's Central institution followed by a three-year period of probation during which the prospective teacher would engage in practise teaching under European supervision.

At the conclusion of this six-year period a Certificate would be awarded, the nature of which (1st, 2nd or 3rd class) would be determined by the results of examinations held during the probationary period. A teacher showing promise could then embark upon a further four-year period of teaching, again interspersed with examinations, at the successful conclusion of which he would be awarded a Schoolmaster's Certificate. This represented the highest level attainable for an African teacher at this time. Included as appendices to the Code were the proposed forms that the suggested Certificates might take.

As for Inspection and Reports, definite lines were laid down. These were to be followed by those

missions participating in the proposed scheme of Government grants-in-aid to African education. Each mission would thereby assume responsibility for the efficiency of the schools under its control and for their proper visitation and inspection at fixed intervals.

It now remained to present this suggested Code to Government and attempt to gain official approval and active support. To begin with, the Board prepared a letter for submission to Commissioner Sharpe together with a copy of the proposed Code.³¹ The letter set forth the Board's views on the current position and future prospects for education in the Protectorate and in particular, their suggestions as to how Government might assist their labours. They noted that of the 60,000 children and adults currently receiving some form of education, over 90% were enrolled in schools and allied institutions operated by Missions subscribing to the Code.³²

In their plea for financial assistance the Board pointed out that "a large part of the work done by the

³¹The letter to Sharpe, the contents of the Draft Code, and the description of the meeting of the Board with Sharpe are summarized from L & W, July-August, 1905.

³²In mid-1905, this included virtually all the missions operating in the country with the exception of the UMCA and the two Roman Catholic missions. It should be appreciated that the latter were but recently established and that as a consequence, their educational activities were still relatively modest.

educated natives in the employment of the various European agencies in the country as well as of the Administration itself, was the direct result of the work done by the education departments of the Missions at work in the Protectorate." The letter went on to observe that the African people themselves contributed some £29,000 annually to Government revenue in the form of hut taxes and that in the opinion of the Board it was only just that some portion of this sum should be used to benefit the people directly in the form of Government financial aid to the country's schools. Specifically, the Board expressed its opinion that "Primary Education makes the first and most clamant call on our resources as tending to reach and benefit the larger number of the population of the Protectorate." The Board further recognized that Technical Training was the most costly branch of education. It was therefore suggested that with regard to primary education there be made "an annual grant of one shilling per head of the average attendance for the whole year for each school fulfilling the requirements of its grade," and for "Technical Training, a grant of two pounds, ten shillings per annum for each apprentice fulfilling the conditions of the Code."

Sharpe "made a very gracious reply to the Deputation

and promised them his warmest assistance in approaching the Colonial Office on this subject." He cautioned, however, that "He had gone into the matter so far as the other Colonies and Dependencies [of Great Britain] were concerned," and had discovered "that none of the Protectorates or Colonies had got grants from home revenues." Sharpe, nevertheless, assured the Board that "it might be possible to secure from the Colonial Office some recognition" and concluded by remarking that he was shortly proceeding home on leave and would personally lay the subject before the Home Government in London. In thanking Sharpe on behalf of the Board, Henderson indicated that they regarded his reply to their plea as "favourable."³³ There, for the time being, matters stood. Two years were to elapse, however, before the Nyasaland Government felt able to take positive action and then in terms considerably less generous than had been requested.

A Period of Growth

With the promulgation in 1906 of the first Educational Code, and with the lively expectation of imminent financial assistance from Government, there was a general feeling in mission circles that the way lay open

³³ All direct quotations again from L & W, July-August, 1905.

for a period of expansion.

Nyasaland itself was growing. In 1905, responsibility for the Protectorate was transferred from the Foreign Office to the Colonial Office. In 1907, it officially assumed the name Nyasaland; the title of Commissioner was changed to that of Governor; and a Legislative Council was formed with provisions for planter and missionary representation.

The economy was developing as well. The year 1907 saw the completion of the railway from the Lower Shire to Blantyre. Its terminus at Limbe some three miles distant created this sister township almost overnight. The rail link in turn gave a substantial impetus to the multiplication of those European planters whose crops of tea, cotton and tobacco were now superceding the old standby, coffee.

Hand in hand with this economic growth grew the need for increasing numbers of skilled Africans. In consequence, the bulk of the European community at this time were strong supporters of the established missions and of the education that they provided.³⁴

³⁴For general background to the foregoing, see Griff Jones, Britain and Nyasaland (London, 1964), and also John G. Pike, Malawi, A Political and Economic History (London, 1968), particularly the chapter on "The Economy." For a useful and more detailed treatment of the latter, see also Michael Gelfand, Lakeside Pioneers (Oxford, 1964). There are also a number of articles and reminiscences appearing in the Nyasaland Journal over the years that provide insights into particular aspects of the Protectorate's development.

The first Colonial Office³⁵ Report for the Protectorate contained a table of educational statistics, together with a brief summary of the educational position in the country. Among other things, the Report noted approvingly that with regard to Government Circulars published in the vernacular, "very little difficulty is now experienced by the inhabitants in reading and understanding the directions given." As to the training of native artisans, this was felt to be "much to the benefit of local industries."³⁶

A statistical table appearing in this, the inaugural year of Government's Grant-in-Aid of Education, reveals some interesting contrasts.³⁷ The Livingstonia Mission, with virtually half the total number both of schools and of scholars registered in the Protectorate, received little more than a quarter of the total grant. The Church of Scotland Mission, on the other hand, with less than a quarter of Livingstonia's schools and less than an eighth of her total number of students, received

³⁵NLS: Colonial Office Annual Reports, No. 574, Nyasaland, 1907-08 (H.M.S.O., 1909), Section V, "Education."

³⁶Ibid.

³⁷Ibid. The Grant-in-Aid from Government, inaugurated in 1907, totalled some £1000. It remained at this level until 1919 when it was doubled to £2000 per annum.

parity in terms of the grant. Moreover, the DRC, the ZIM, the White Fathers and the UMCA all catered to larger numbers of students than did the C. of S. yet received something less than half the grant given the latter.³⁸ It is perhaps possible to interpret this distribution as indicating a certain bias towards that Mission, operating essentially in the Shire Highlands, from which it appeared most likely that Government and the settler community would derive the most advantage in terms of its educated African graduates.

Overall, 1907 was a propitious year with evidence of advance upon a variety of fronts. The White Fathers were offering refresher courses to their teachers.³⁹ The DRC welcomed Miss Daisy Laurie, "a highly qualified graduate and exceedingly able and experienced lady teacher" whose arrival "meant a definite advance in the quality of our normal work."⁴⁰ The NIM converted their Industrial School at Cholo into a training school for teachers.⁴¹ Meanwhile, at the Seventh-day Adventist headquarters, the American Negro minister Thomas Branch was replaced by Elder Joel C. Rogers. Branch had expressed himself as

³⁸ See Appendix B for a copy of this table.

³⁹ Rep. Ed. Dept., 1931, p. 20.

⁴⁰ Ibid., p. 21.

⁴¹ Ibid., p. 22.

anxious to "take his family away from Nyasaland in order to put his children in school."⁴²

Rogers appears to have been an energetic individual who proceeded at once to make his presence felt. One of his first acts was to change the name of the Mission's headquarters from Plainfield, "which meant nothing to the Africans," to Malamulo, which means in Chinyanja, rules, laws or commandments.⁴³ The School reopened in August with some 200 applicants, the majority of whom were accepted. Although not yet ready to introduce fees, the Mission's previous practise of paying three shillings per month to students to attend was abolished. The students were still expected, however, to spend three hours each morning working on the Mission farm. Those who refused to accept this condition were dismissed. There were plenty of others to fill their places and in terms of manual labour the conditions were not much more onerous than those at the Scottish Missions. And, they were still free.⁴⁴ Nevertheless, it should be recognized that the education offered was from an academic standpoint, minimal. To quote a representative of the Mission writing

⁴² Robinson, op. cit., p. 10.

⁴³ Ibid.

⁴⁴ Ibid., p. 11.

over twenty years later,

In the early years of the Mission there was no defined educational policy and the outschools were only a means of bringing the Gospel to the people, and the people were only taught to read portions of the four Gospels and the psalms and the rudiments of writing and arithmetic.⁴⁵

This continued to be the pattern among the small but growing Industrial Missions. Much of their efforts were concentrated on attempting to become economically self-supporting. The ZIM continued to grow considerable amounts of coffee as a cash crop. The SDA, finding that much of their land was suitable for use as pasture, purchased a herd of cows, a thoroughbred Shorthorn bull and a separator and began to manufacture butter. Wrapped in banana leaves and carried through the cool of the night to Blantyre, some forty miles distant, this industry was soon bringing in over £100 to the Mission annually.⁴⁶

The older established missions also continued to grow and to consolidate their fields. In particular the DRC, with the opening of its own Normal School at Mvera, began to develop along lines of its own choosing. No longer was the Mission as dependent as it had previously been upon Livingstonia. By 1907, the DRC was second in the Protectorate to Livingstonia in terms of the number

⁴⁵ Rep. Ed. Dept., 1932, p. 17.

⁴⁶ Robinson, op. cit., pp. 11 and 15.

of village schools it had established and in the total number of pupils in attendance. Only the UMCA had more missionaries in the Nyasaland field dealing specifically with educational matters.

The Third General Missionary Conference

In 1910, the DRC's increasing prominence was recognized by the selection of Mvera as the site of the Third General Missionary Conference of Nyasaland. The Conference was convened on Saturday, the 30th of July, and was attended by over 70 delegates representing eight missions. Present in addition to those from the DRC, Blantyre and Livingstonia were missionaries from the ZIM, the BIM, the NIM and the SAGM. There was also an observer from the LMS station at Abercorn in Northeastern Rhodesia, a mission field the LMS shared with Livingstonia, and a Rev. C. Inwood from England, a delegate of the Keswick Mission Council there.⁴⁷

The two Roman Catholic Missions, although divided upon the question of accepting a portion of the Government Grant for education, were united in declining to attend, as was the UMCA.⁴⁸ The latter's position was stated in a friendly but firm letter from the Right Rev. Bishop

⁴⁷Report of the Third General Missionary Conference of Nyasaland, Held at Mvera 30th July to 7th August, 1910 (Blantyre, 1910), pp. iii-iv and 1. Hereinafter referred to as 1910 Conference.

⁴⁸The White Fathers accepted a grant-in-aid; the Montfort Marist Fathers did not.

J. E. Hine sent to Hetherwick as President of the Conference. The crux of the matter lay in Hine's statement that "We of the UMCA have never wished to interfere with or encroach on mission districts already occupied by other societies. But we have always refused to bind ourselves not to do so if any call should come."⁴⁹

The SDA was not represented either. It was their policy as well to refrain from participating in the Government Grant. But we are told, however, that Pastor Rogers from his first arrival in the country had been "extremely anxious to establish friendly relations with the missionaries of other societies."⁵⁰ Rogers had visited the Blantyre Mission where he had been hospitably received by Hetherwick who personally showed him over the grounds. In 1908, on the occasion of a meeting called by the Governor to discuss the distribution of the Education Grant, Rogers had attended. There he had made it clear that "it was not [his] intention to apply for a part of the Grant, his sole desire being to meet the other missionaries."⁵¹

Two of the nine "Diets," or Conference sessions, were devoted to education. The more important of these

⁴⁹1910 Conference, pp. 5-7, for Bishop Hine's letter, sent from Livingstone, N.W. Rhodesia, and Hetherwick's reply, dispatched during the Conference.

⁵⁰Robinson, op. cit., p. 12.

⁵¹Ibid.

was the first which was devoted to an examination of "The Working of the 1905 Code." Two papers were presented; the first by Elmslie, the second by Hetherwick. A number of points were made concerning educational policy generally, and in some cases these reflected changed opinions brought about by the passage of time and the accretion of experience.

Laws, the Chairman of the Diet, opened the proceedings by affirming that education must be real, not artificial, and that it should be carefully adapted to African requirements. This view was seconded in both the papers read. Hetherwick, renouncing the philosophy upon which much of the Blantyre curriculum had previously been based, stated that the chief weakness of the Code as it stood was that it was "too much modeled on the Scotch Code."⁵² He felt rather that "our Code must be African to meet African wants and the African character." "The African needs to be trained above all things," Hetherwick continued, "to think, to reason. He can easily be taught to work by rote or rule, but to develop his reasoning faculties is the main aim of our educational efforts." Elmslie added in corroboration the observation that "Too often the [African] teacher by his prodigious memory has

⁵²1910 Conference. Paper by Hetherwick on pp. 21-23.

merely retained what has been poured into him and gives it out as such, hence the general intelligence of the pupils is not awakened."⁵³

It was agreed that the primary schools should reach as widely as possible and that to that end the Missions' "best and most strenuous efforts" should be expended on them. With regard to the perennial controversy of English vs. the vernacular, Hetherwick believed that the strength of the existing Code was due to the degree to which it was based upon primary education given wholly in the vernacular. Miss Lawrie of the DRC advocated giving greater attention to grammar and composition in the vernacular⁵⁴ and Elmslie thought that the use of vernacular Scriptures should be insisted upon. English Bibles he regarded as something of a status symbol being "carried even by those who cannot read English," to the detriment of their possessing reading material in their own languages.

As for the teaching of English, Elmslie and Hetherwick again saw eye to eye. Hetherwick felt that the language should be taught more conversationally while Elmslie observed that "taught orally [it] could be made an

⁵³ Ibid. Paper by Elmslie on pp. 17-21.

⁵⁴ Ibid. From the discussion of Elmslie's and Hetherwick's papers. Noted on p. 23.

attraction and would ensure good attendance." Mr. Holmes of the ZIM expressed the view that undue importance was attached to the teaching of English in the country.⁵⁵

While accepting that this might have been true in some instances, Elmslie warned against withholding English entirely. He argued that African teachers had to "advance along the line of English civilization and thought" and that if instruction in the language be refused to them, "we stand in the way of their progress." In point of fact, it appears that for many Africans in Nyasaland at this time, the opportunity of learning English was a prime factor in their regular school attendance, and in many cases, in their nominal acceptance of Christianity as well.

Turning to the classification of schools and teachers, Hetherwick argued that both were too complicated. In his opinion the categories should be reduced simply to Vernacular, Anglo-Vernacular, and Normal or Teacher Training. As for "higher" education, J. A. Day of the NIM voiced the extreme view that this should be given, if at all, solely to those "who give promise of future usefulness in the evangelisation of their country."⁵⁶ Elmslie took a broader, more pragmatic view. He felt that what he called secondary schools should conform to the needs

⁵⁵ Ibid.

⁵⁶ Ibid.

of the people and to the means at the missions' disposal for implementing these needs. Realizing that the education provided by the Missions was "eagerly sought after," he thought that here in the case of "higher" education was an excellent opportunity for the introduction of fees, particularly in the case of those students not willing to commit themselves in advance to mission work following the completion of their education. Much was made both in the formal Papers and in the ensuing discussion of the financial problems posed by the missions' educational successes. Hetherwick in particular noted the increasing costs while expressing gratitude to Government for its recognition of mission efforts "by a small grant in aid."

Continuing their examination of "higher" education, both Elmslie and Hetherwick were again agreed that the Arts Course, as provided for in the 1905 Code, was not of much practical value. At Livingstonia it had been given up after a five-year trial. Elmslie's views on the subject possess interest as reflecting the prevailing attitude at what was then one of the most progressive missions educationally speaking. In concluding his paper, he spoke of the Arts Course and higher education generally by noting that the former

. . . no doubt benefitted a few individuals, but it is not the individual benefit of a few which should be the deciding factor in such a case, and there is nothing in the general life of the people which demands it. The higher education of a few will not benefit the mass at the present stage. Pupils may absorb but they cannot transmit the results of their higher education. I call it higher education only in relation to the status of education generally. The general mass is as yet incapable of receiving the fruits of their study even if they have assimilated the knowledge themselves. As yet to the mass, the questions coming under logic, ethics, psychology and natural philosophy are unreal to the native. When the intellectual needs of the people demand such courses, then is the time to organise them. Our work meantime is to create such a need by a gradual awakening of the intellect by means of studies which are more natural and congenial.⁵⁷

It was with a view to working along these lines that the Conference re-examined the methods of teaching a number of subjects. The aim in all cases was to relate the classroom teaching to the environment and to the everyday lives of the people concerned. Arithmetic, it was agreed, should be more practical in its application. Compound proportion and the more complex fractions, at best merely memorized by rote, might well be dropped in favor of practical exercises related to the activities of buying and selling, measuring and calculating, that took place during an average day in any village community.

In a similar vein, Elmslie felt that Geography and History should be made "recreative" lessons, even at

⁵⁷Ibid. From Elmslie's paper, p. 21.

the village school level. "What native," he asked,

does not know postage stamps of half a dozen countries in Africa today? If on a visit to a village the old people who ask questions about the stamps they see on letters can receive information about the countries and people whence the stamps issue, we need not hesitate to utilize this method of teaching in primary schools.⁵⁸

Geography, it was therefore concluded, should be taught in combination with History. Its teaching should begin with lessons in map reading and interpretation. The teacher might then proceed to impart a knowledge first, of the local district, then, that of the entire country, followed by a description of Africa as a whole and finally the world generally. Study of the European exploration of Africa; the spread of various civilisations throughout the globe; the growth of the British Empire; all of these could usefully combine aspects both of Geography and of History.

With regard to the latter, the teaching should not be confined to British history alone but should deal with the movements of races, tribes and nations in the broadest sense, examining their effect upon each other and upon world history as a whole. Ideally, instruction in History, with "the history of their own land." "What could be more inappropriate," exclaimed Hetherwick, "than having a class

⁵⁸ Ibid.

engaged for a whole year's work on a bit of English or Scottish history."⁵⁹

A problem considered at some length was that of the paucity of sufficient suitable textbooks and other material printed in the various vernacular languages. Rev. W. G. Robertson of the LMS stressed the considerable difficulty he experienced in following the Code in his district owing to the lack of vernacular reading books.⁶⁰ Abercorn was of course particularly isolated. Nevertheless, although all of the long-established missions maintained printing presses which regularly produced a wealth of material, composed and translated by their missionaries at some considerable expenditure of energy and time, it was not enough. That this lack was recognized as constituting a very real problem was demonstrated by the fact that the opening Diet of the Conference was devoted to a consideration of "Vernacular Literature." Papers were read by Hetherwick on "Bible Translation," and by Rev. A. M. Anderson of the Zomba station of the C. of S. on

⁵⁹Ibid. From Hetherwick's paper, p. 22. Nevertheless, this archaic form of teaching may still be seen today in some of Malawi's more remote and less supervised schools. For similar views expressed both prior to 1910 and subsequently, see supra, Chapter I, p. 82, footnote 133.

⁶⁰Ibid. From the discussion of Elmslie's and Hetherwick's papers. Noted on p. 23. Robertson's mission field lay in North Eastern Rhodesia, with its headquarters at Kawimba, Abercorn.

"The Growing Need of Vernacular Literature."⁶¹

Much of this concern was understandably centred on strictly evangelical needs, but the demands of secular education received attention as well, as in the following passage from Anderson's paper.

Each of the larger missions has prepared its own elementary reading books. Speaking for the Blantyre Mission I can say we are not satisfied with what we have, but are anxious to produce or adopt a better series. To follow the reading sheets which are used to teach the alphabet and syllables, we need three small primers at the most saleable prices; say 1d, 3d and 6d. A very simple book of arithmetic is required for instruction in the four rules and their application to the problems of everyday life. We need a simple text-book of geography and physiography combined and a simple history book with a religious bearing having chapters on such subjects say, as man's place in nature, his early history, his customs and beliefs, the coming of Christianity with special reference to this country, the establishment of foreign governments, etc., also a simple grammar of the vernacular based on the natural structure of Bantu languages. The above seem the irreducible minimum for school work.⁶²

Rev. J. S. Murray of the DRC stressed the need for care in the construction of an educational system to prevent Africans from looking down upon their own languages. Somewhat paradoxically, however, Murray did not wish to see the Bible, printed in the vernacular, used as a reading book in schools "lest through familiarity it should

⁶¹Ibid. The report on this Diet is on pp. 8-16.

⁶²Ibid., p. 13.

lose its power."⁶³ This view appeared to contradict that of Elmslie that vernacular Scriptures should be insisted upon, although it is possible that Elmslie was not thinking solely in terms of classroom instruction. At any rate, this divergence was symptomatic of the growing differentiation between Livingstonia and the DRC regarding their philosophical approach to mission work. This was particularly marked in the degree of free thinking encouraged among their adherents at every level of their education by the two missions. However, it should be noted that this divergence was greater among the ordained missionaries than among those men and women concerned solely with educational work.

In conclusion, an Appendix to the Conference Report contained a statistical summary which sheds some light upon the level of educational development in Nyasaland at this time.⁶⁴ In 1910 the missions, it appears, were spending a total of over £9,000 a year on education. Consequently, Government's annual Grant of £1,000 although modest, was not yet seen by the missions to be as niggardly a sum as it was to appear a decade

⁶³ Ibid., p. 16.

⁶⁴ Ibid. See Appendix III of the Report, "Statistics of Nyasaland Missions," p. 86, as well as the "Table of Statistics," p. 87.

hence as Government failed to keep pace with vastly increased Mission expenditure. Worthy of comment is the fact that in 1910, some £555 were collected by the missions in the form of school fees, all but £5 of which were paid by pupils at the two Scottish Missions. Indeed the £384 collected by Livingstonia represented almost 20% of that mission's total expenditure upon education and exceeded its Government grant by more than £100.

A further inference that may be drawn from this statistical summary deals with the proportion of children and young adults of school age receiving some form of education. The total population of Nyasaland at this time is given as 922,313. This is almost certainly an underestimate due to the difficulty of obtaining accurate census returns, particularly from the more remote districts. The problem was further aggravated by the deceptions practised by numerous chiefs and local headmen with an eye shrewdly cocked towards Government's regulation requiring the payment of hut tax by all able-bodied males and single women.

The figure given in the Report as representing the total Average School Attendance for the country was 63,416. This figure was arrived at by computing 60% of the total number of pupils enrolled, two-thirds of whom

were male. As approximately one-quarter of the Protectorate's population embraced Islam with varying degrees of enthusiasm thus precluding their enrollment at Christian mission schools, it may be seen that by 1910 a substantial proportion of Nyasaland's non-Muslim males between the ages of ten and twenty were exposed to at least the rudiments of literacy in their vernacular language.

One final point worth noting is that in a total European population of 587, 220 were listed as Christian missionaries. This figure did not include, however, all missionary wives nor their dependent children. The total figure was therefore probably in the region of 300, or more than half the European population.

CHAPTER III

THE LULL BEFORE THE STORM: 1905-1915

Throughout the decade leading up to the outbreak of World War I, the various missions continued to expand and to develop along essentially idiosyncratic lines. In the following sections the highlights of their material growth are briefly examined together with their introduction of new educational concepts.

Livingstonia

That this examination will be considerably more detailed than those provided for the other missions, in part reflects Livingstonia's continued dominant role in the field of education; it is also a measure of the wealth of documentation available concerning its educational activities at this time.¹

¹This section concerning the Livingstonia Mission deals with a period for which there is a considerable body of archival sources, most notably in files of correspondence available for inspection at the NLS, EU, and EH. Useful published sources include the Mission journal Aurora and the various annual and semi-annual reports of the Mission as well as the work of Laws, Elmslie, Fraser and W. P. Livingstone. The source from which I have drawn most extensively, however, is the unpublished Diary of the Overtoun Institute, examined at the Church of Scotland offices in Edinburgh. This invaluable document, running to some 150 pages of manuscript transcribed in longhand,

By 1910 it was increasingly apparent that the Overtoun Institute was capable only of training an élite, some of whom would remain in the educational service of the Mission going on to become Station Schoolmasters, District Supervisors, or Village School Inspectors.

There simply were not the resources to contemplate educating a sufficient number of fully trained teachers to staff the steadily proliferating village schools.

Overtoun therefore must concentrate on quality rather than quantity. Heretofore it had been possible to accept all students indicating a willingness to be trained as teachers. However, the demand for places at the Institute was now such that a greater selectivity could be exercised.

The beneficial results of this policy were soon reflected

provides a running commentary upon the Mission's development from a wholly educational point of view. Its entries, set down both at irregular intervals and in the form of annual reports, span the twenty years from the founding of the Overtoun Institute to the outbreak of the First World War. Here may be seen the raw material from which much of the published work previously referred to has been derived. In consequence, those direct quotes indicated throughout this section are to be understood as having been extracted from this diary unless otherwise indicated. It should be further noted that these entries, though the work of several writers as evidenced by the varying handwriting, are in almost all cases unsigned. Undoubtedly, however, they represent the work of such senior European missionaries stationed at Kondowe throughout this period as James Henderson, W. P. Young, D. R. Mackenzie and T. S. Kirkwood.

in the higher standards aimed at and achieved by staff and students alike. Percolating down through the several educational levels at the out-Stations as well as at the central Institution this had a most salutary effect.

There was in addition the problem of whether students should be accepted by the Institute who had not received their preliminary education at Kondowe or at one of Livingstonia's four subsidiary Stations; Bandawe, Loudon, Ekwendeni or Karonga. These students fell into two categories. First, were those nominated by sister missions such as the LMS.² In a second category were those young men from throughout southern Africa who, as the fame of Livingstonia spread, determined to travel thence on foot in search of an education. They came singly and in small groups from as far away as Salisbury and Angola. When they arrived, the length of their journeys a measure of their zeal, it was difficult to turn them away. Adherents of the Mission itself, it was agreed, must take precedence. Still, there was much heartsearching. Dr. Laws and his colleagues were of the strong opinion that individual initiative in seeking out education should be

²The London Missionary Society had in 1905 adopted the Overtoun Institute for a time as their official "secondary education agency."

encouraged, if only to demonstrate to the majority of the students the value of the training they were receiving by the lengths to which their less fortunate fellows would go to obtain it. As a result, although applicants from a distance were subjected to an entrance examination and a personal interview, a substantial proportion of the most promising were accepted and their fees were either greatly reduced or waived entirely.

While recognizing the dominant though a limited role of Overtoun, the key to overall advance was thought to lie with the four Station Boarding Schools. If they were equipped with strong teaching staffs and were enabled to exercise a certain selectivity in their intake of students, there was confidence that "a fair number of lads" could be given sufficient instruction in ordinary school subjects, in school management, and in teaching method, so as to enable them to attain a respectable standard as teachers in village schools. The most promising would be encouraged to proceed to the Institution for the full Normal Teachers' Course.

A new policy for the village schools themselves was introduced in 1908. In the interests of economy it was decided to divide these schools into two distinct

categories. In the smaller villages, schools would be staffed with two teachers only who would "take their pupils no further than a good knowledge of vernacular reading, with arithmetic and writing added as well as singing, and of course Scripture lessons." The larger villages would each have four teachers assigned to their schools and the work would be carried as far as Standard 3.

Staffing of schools at all levels remained the chief problem, more important than the severe shortages of school equipment. The personality of the teacher was regarded as counting for much more than the quality of the buildings and equipment. Great stress was therefore laid upon character and for this reason older men were welcomed at most levels of teacher training as "their lack of book knowledge and slowness of assimilation are overbalanced by their experience of life and worth of character." It was largely for these older men that the "Continuation" school had been designed. In these annual refresher courses held at Kondowe, "an effort was made to give [the teachers] some idea of school management and of the importance of [their] own personality in relation to [their] pupils."

In 1912 the Continuation school was replaced by a

"Special Course" in which were enrolled village teachers who had "shown themselves in their work worthy and able men" after completing the acting teachers' course. These teachers spent a year at Kondowa. Part of their time was spent in attending classes in Standards 6 and 7. The remaining hours were devoted to courses in school management and teaching methods. In this way it was hoped to provide "men of weight, character and knowledge for the work of the ordinary village teacher." Younger men coming up through the Normal Course would go on to positions as Inspectors and District Supervisors rather than return to teaching in the village schools.

Discipline posed problems. These were for the most part related to what might be termed the varied motivation of the students. It was felt generally that the "educational advance and the multiplying of schools have brought forth that type of teacher who is a mere professional with an eye to good pay and easy hours rather than one who sees in his work an opportunity of great and worthy service." In 1911 a wave of petty thievery swept the Institution and in a report on the progress of Standard 6 in 1913 it was admitted that though "the work of the class generally was good," there were "a few . . .

examples of the type developed by this stage of our work, bent on advantage to self in any direction at any cost, who gave trouble and tended to lower the tone of the class."

That there were a few loafers and troublemakers is very likely true, but it is also true that the standards of morality and constant application upheld by the missionaries were high in any context and seemed particularly so in this alien environment. What might be permissible in one society was severely frowned upon in another. Moreover the advantage, if not the whip hand, increasingly lay with the missionary. For every student who fell from grace, young boy or mature pupil-teacher, there were a dozen clamouring to replace him. Of this, both sides were well aware. Taken proportionally, therefore, and with due regard to the circumstances, the high standards set by the Mission seem to have met with a remarkable degree of compliance.

A thoughtful and perceptive though perhaps unduly pessimistic analysis of the whole teacher-pupil relationship and the goals ultimately aimed at is given in the following extract from the Institution diary for 1912. Commenting on the teacher's responsibility the writer

notes that:

We however have more to do than giving our boys a passing knowledge of reading and writing and all the subjects of the school curriculum. We have not to turn out scholars who may wish to use their knowledge in teaching. We have to turn out teachers with an appetite for knowledge and an aptitude for scholarship. By teachers I mean men of character rooted and grounded in the faith with knowledge of child life and skill in handling children and with . . . vision . . . a large proportion of those who finish their course in September were not men but youths, mentally and physically.

Again reporting on the year's work from the moral as well as from the mental point of view I must not look merely to behaviour in school under the master's eye nor to work in the school room as proved by examination results. I must consider as far as possible the whole life of the boys.

Things sometimes come to light that show us how much of the life of the boys is hidden from us Europeans. At present there are at the Institution a father and his son, each pursuing his studies, the father in the Theological course, the son in the Normal course. At the end of the session the father returned to his village, the son remained at the Institution with his fellow Normal students for training in manual work. Before going away the father came to me. He told me how here at the Institution he had been accustomed to pray with his son and read the Scriptures with him morning and evening seeking to strengthen him against the evil around him in the society of our students. Continuing, he said he was afraid to leave his son behind him here among the other boys in the moral atmosphere created by the other boys, without these safeguards and asked me to take his [the father's] place. That was a saddening commentary on the everyday life of our boys. I don't infer from this incident that evil is specially rampant among

our boys. I rather think it but means this; that the mischief makers are more energetic in their mischief making than the law keepers in their keeping of the law. The mischief makers are there and I am sorry to say that among those who finish their course this year there were few whom I could describe as weighty on the side of righteousness. Among their juniors I am not grumbling because boys are boys. My point is this, that we of the Normal College staff are here to turn out teachers whose power should be more in their character and ability than in their knowledge. Judging from this viewpoint that incident together with the petty thieving that troubled us many times during the year makes me think that the past year was not so successful. At any rate I do not feel satisfied.

There was a sequel to this soul-searching in the Annual Report for the following year when the writer recalled that although "last year . . . I wrote somewhat adversely concerning the schoolboys and Normal Students; I had to; happily no such necessity is laid upon me this year. The past year was one of quiet and pleasant work." Certainly discipline continued to be strict. Offenses included smoking, absence without leave, and most common of all, impertinence. First offenders were generally let off with a spell of manual labour or perhaps temporary rustication as punishment. Second or third offenders were often summarily dismissed.

While opposition to education on the part of entire communities continued to diminish throughout this

period, cases still existed. Generally, this opposition was simply that of a conservative community tied to the old ways and suspicious of anything new. "Why should we leave worshipping the spirits of our fathers to serve the God you speak about?" was one refrain. Other complaints varied from the suspicion that the schools tended "to minister to laziness," to the attribution of responsibility for any local calamity to the newly-arrived teacher, usually a stranger and thus an unknown quantity. There were isolated instances of attempts to poison a teacher's food or even spear the intruders, but these incidents were stated to be very much the exceptions and "in most cases the teachers [were] welcomed and looked upon as friends."

Opposition seemed to be most prevalent on the northern Lakeshore. This was attributed by the Mission to the influence of "boys . . . [returning] from the South bringing with them money earned there and evil habits learned there." Towards the end of this pre-War period it was noted that "In most of the villages . . . the people were luke-warm in their attendance at and support of our schools." It seems on reflection that one reason for this may have been the greater degree of self-sufficiency among the indigenous Henga with their fertile

soil and plentiful supply of fish from the Lake. They were not so dependent upon Livingstonia for the material benefits it provided as were the peoples of the less richly endowed interior. Still, it was noted in 1911 that "the report from the Lakeshore is not wholly bad." In support of this contention several examples were cited of Christian observance and even of active evangelism.

Fortunately, from the point of view of the Livingstonia Mission, alternative religious influences were largely lacking at this time throughout its field of operations. The Catholics were not as yet active north of Lilongwe; as for Islam, only a few of Livingstonia's teachers working in villages south of Bandawe were in contact with its disciples. At the Institute it was noted that "parts of the history course of Standard 7 dealt with Mohammedanism." As for the pupils' attitudes, "Some of them were inclined to see little of evil in it. The Mohammedans they said worshipped one God as we do, why trouble about them?" But the reference concluded intriguingly by remarking that "some knowledge of the reality of Mohammedanism completely changed their attitude toward it."

The impact of Eliot Kamwana's millenarian crusade in 1909* seems ostensibly to have been viewed with

*For a fuller treatment, see Chapter IV, pp. 191-196.

equanimity, although one might well recall the previously cited remark regarding "how much of the life of the boys is hidden from us Europeans." One reason for the lack of concern is provided by the statement that although "the coming of Ethiopianism has not been without its effect on pupils, the Institution district has not yet been invaded by the agents of the movement." No mention was made of the fact that the movement's leader was a lapsed Livingstonia product. The following analysis seems on the whole optimistic.

Their propaganda is well known all over the country and its principle effect among our boys has been to arouse a spirit of enquiry and of keen debate upon the chief points of their teaching. Within the limits of his apprehension of the questions involved, the native is a keen theologian and anything that comes to him as new will have his attention at once. But I think the chief result among our members as well as among the pupils is the stirring up of a spirit of loyalty to what they have already received as the word of God. The periodical of the movement is sent to some of our leading teachers and no doubt read by them, but there have been no defections nor do I anticipate the teachings of the "Watchtower" will produce any.

"Higher" education was of course the greatest of Livingstonia's drawing cards. The Arts course continued to flourish although the reservations expressed at the Mvera Conference led to a series of modifications aimed

at broadening its approach. An interesting feature of higher education as offered at Kondowe was the stress placed by Laws upon what was termed "Economics," in which he regularly took a class of the most advanced students resident at the Institution. His lectures dealt "with the conditions and needs of the country" and his students "received instruction in the development and function of government, the necessity for and the use of taxes . . . the use of money, the evil of debt [and] the necessity of thrift and industry." The pupils it was noted, "were rather surprised to find that taxation formerly under native rule was much heavier than now under British rule."

School equipment was a major problem at all levels. Most of it had to be manufactured locally and as pupils and apprentices became increasingly proficient in the use of tools, shortages were gradually overcome. The equipment thus provided was rudimentary but serviceable. In addition to desks and seats for both pupils and teachers there would be "two or three blackboards," which inspection usually shows to be the lid of a provision box painted black, an easel of syllables and letters of the alphabet, and either a horn, hand-bell or drum for

summoning the pupils." Chalk was strictly rationed. Individual pupils were required to purchase their own slates and if sufficiently affluent, primers and exercise books. School buildings continued to be for the most part wattle and daub structures although these tended to be "fairly substantial and of good size." Gradually, these buildings were replaced by schools constructed of sun-dried brick.

School fees were now the rule although more or less nominal at village school level. Payment in kind, fowls or baskets of grain, was accepted with reluctance in the light of the wastage that could occur. Cash was much preferred and in 1910 some £384 were received in fees. In a few schools, the total expenditure necessitated by teachers' wages and ancillary expenses was actually exceeded by the fees paid by the local community. Valuable contributions were also made in the form of school buildings and teachers' houses constructed gratis by the local peoples.

Village teachers continued to be paid a modest enough stipend, amounting in most cases to little more than ten to twenty shillings a year in cash. They were, however, provided with free housing, their own gardens,

and ample time to cultivate them. As a result they were essentially self-sufficient. Station teachers were of course better paid, while those employed at the Institute itself earned up to £10 a year.

While the education of women and girls was not totally neglected, it continued to be an exceptional young woman who proceeded very far up the Mission's educational ladder. This seems largely attributable to two interrelated factors. The first was the widely prevalent scepticism with which parents viewed the investment of capital in the education of a female member of the family. As they saw it, the benefits which might in due course accrue would either fall to another or would be submerged by the demands of homemaking. Secondly, most girls came so late to schoolwork that they were lost to marriage before they could progress further than the lower Standards, if indeed they attained that stage. Only the daughters of those employed by or otherwise living in close proximity to the Institution or to one of the Mission's Stations might be influenced to pursue their education from a sufficiently early age to make it possible for them to reach the Normal Course level.

The Evening School at Kondowe for artisans and

Mission employees generally continued to be an attraction although less so than previously. At first conducted with much success by Charles Domingo,* it apparently deteriorated following his departure for the station at Loudon.

In 1913 it was noted with regret that the number of pupils attending had "decreased greatly." The report added that there had been a similar fall in the quality of the work done. The writer expressed himself as dissatisfied with much of the teaching and commented that his "trust in the unsupervised energy and zeal of the teachers" had been shaken. He remarked that "Next year, I hope to give the evening school more personal attention."

Increasing attention was paid throughout these years to what might be termed extracurricular activities. A Young Men's Christian Association was formed which, though eminently successful, seems to have resolved itself essentially into a debating society. Following its founding in 1906 it was recorded that

The Society was very popular from the very first meeting, as it gave an opportunity of freely expressing opinions and interchanging views which formerly had been discussed at the dormitory fires only. . . . Debates are keen and what is better they are frequently conducted in a manner which shows the participants to be remarkably well informed on the subject in question.

*For a fuller treatment, see Chapter IV, pp. 196-209.

In addition to the YMCA, music and athletics were popular. Football was introduced and once comprehended, made great headway. Sports were regarded as developing in the students "a spirit of self-reliance . . . which few natives naturally possess." Lastly, a Literary Society was formed. In 1907 its popularity was materially aided by the establishment of a small library. This was initially stocked with some 250 books sent from Scotland. To this nucleus, substantial additions were subsequently made. The library enabled many of the students to gain a broader awareness of the outside world than was perhaps possible from the textbooks used in classes.

In closing this rather detailed examination, it seems appropriate to touch upon the hazards inseparable from success. By 1910 the Livingstonia Mission was operating some 446 schools. This was almost twice the number of its nearest Protestant rival, the DRC, four times that of the Blantyre Mission, and represented almost half the total number of schools functioning in the Protectorate as a whole at the time. Loudon Station alone was operating 150 outschools in which 12,000 pupils were enrolled. Rev. Donald Fraser, the missionary in charge, was impelled to question whether there was another mission in the world

with school systems of comparable size. Significantly, he suggested that the point might be put another way; namely, "How many missions in the world are as inadequately staffed as the Livingstonia Mission?"³

Fraser was not alone in this view. Indeed a significant split developed within the Livingstonia Mission at this time as to whether quality or quantity should be their goal educationally speaking. Elmslie remarked in a letter to Laws that the figures cited by the Mission in describing its educational work were deceptive. "From what I see here," he wrote, "I am convinced that to say we have three or four thousand scholars in attendance is simply leading people at home to a wrong conclusion. I find that not 10% of all these make any progress at all, i.e., they never enter what is called Standard 1." In so far as "extent has injured depth of work in school matters here," he felt that it was necessary to reduce the number of outschools "so as to permit . . . those who are sent out to teach . . . getting continuous instruction for a period of years."⁴ This of course was easier said than done. Once opened, usually with substantial local

³ Cited in McCracken, Ph.D. dissertation, op. cit.

⁴ Ibid.

enthusiasm and cooperative labour, villages were very loth to lose schools that they had come to regard as status symbols of considerable importance. This was a dilemma that was to plague not only the Livingstonia Mission field for some time to come.

The Blantyre Mission

Dr. Hetherwick continued to preside over the Blantyre Mission as a whole, but the educational side was now supervised by J. B. Baird and by Miss Low assisted by several senior African teachers, in particular Cedric Masangano and Harry Matecheta.⁵ The arrival of Miss Low in 1908 proved of particular value in helping to attract increasing numbers of small children and adolescent girls to the Station. Persuading girls to attend school was a particular problem, or rather persuading their parents to send them. According to Baird this was "the problem . . ."

⁵ For a general background to developments within the Blantyre Mission at this time, see Life & Work in British Central Africa plus Zomba: The Hetherwick Papers; and NLS: files 7539 and 7540 and 7570 to 7590 comprising a rather one-sided correspondence between Church officials in Scotland and the Blantyre Mission. There are only a few letters to be found from missionaries serving in the field to officials of the Home Church. Also, for Matecheta in particular, see the useful unpublished biography written by his son and currently held by the Blantyre Station of the C.C.A.P., Clement H. Matecheta, "The African Missionary-- The Life and Work of the Rev. Harry Kambwiri Matecheta," no date, but circa 1955.

alas, we can scarcely get the girls to come to school free or no fee. This part of our school work is very discouraging."⁶

But it was not all discouraging. In 1909 the Henry Henderson Institute, named after the Mission's founder, was dedicated by Mrs. A. L. Bruce.⁷ The increased scope of the educational facilities now provided created a focus for aspiring students throughout the southern part of Nyasaland similar to that which the Overtoun Institute had for fifteen years provided the North. That the H.H.I., as it soon came to be universally known, was built at all in this period of expanding responsibilities and decreasing revenues was in large part due to the proceeds of a legacy Henderson himself had left to the Mission.⁸ This was supplemented by a grant of timber given by Government for use as roofs and flooring. The wood was cedar, from the

⁶L & W in BCA, January/February, 1909, p. 4. Italics Baird's.⁷

⁷Mrs. Bruce was a daughter of David Livingstone and was the wife of the owner of one of the largest European-owned plantations in the Shire Highlands. It was against the injustices with regard to their policies toward African tenants living on its property that the A. L. Bruce Estates became one of the chief foci of the discontent that culminated in the Chitembwe Rising of 1915. For this aspect see Shepperson & Price, Independent African (Edinburgh, 1958), pp. 80-81 and passim. For a description of the Henry Henderson Institute's opening ceremony, see Alexander Hetherwick, The Romance of Blantyre (London, 1932), pp. 162-166.

⁸Hetherwick, op. cit., p. 162.

forests on the slopes of Mt. Mlanje.⁹ A number of substantial brick buildings were constructed to provide both classrooms and dormitory accommodation for boarding pupils.

In contrast to the Overtoun Institute, the H.H.I. coexisted with but did not include the technical and industrial departments. In the latter, the apprenticeship system continued to function smoothly. Every year some twelve to twenty artisans successfully completed their three-year course and gained the certificates which enabled them to find employment. These jobs provided both a modest cash income and what might be termed a certain urban, lower middle-class status.

Higher up the academic ladder, Blantyre, although behind Livingstonia in taking the decision to educate and subsequently ordain African Ministers, produced the first finished product with the ordination on March 9th, 1911, of the Rev. Harry Kambwiri Matecheta.¹⁰ Matecheta was then about 40 years of age and had been actively connected with the Mission since 1884 as student, houseboy and teacher/evangelist. Since 1906, Matecheta and his colleague Cedric Masangano had been the Blantyre Mission's first African inspectors of village schools. A year later

⁹Ibid., p. 163.

¹⁰Matecheta, op. cit., p. 28.

in 1912, Stephen Kundecha was ordained at the Mission's Domasi branch, located east of Zomba.¹¹

Domasi was one of four European-staffed Stations maintained by the Church of Scotland in the Shire Highlands. The others, in addition to Blantyre, were located in Zomba and at Mlanje.¹² During the decade immediately preceding the First World War the Blantyre Mission was also tentatively expanding into the Lomwe-speaking districts of neighbouring Portuguese East Africa. By 1914 the Mission was staffed by more than 30 European missionaries and maintained a network of over 120 schools with an average of just under 3,000 pupils in attendance.

The Dutch Reformed Church

Mention has been made of the early dependence of the DRC upon Livingstonia, both as a source of trained teachers and African artisans, and as a finishing school to which they might send their most promising pupils for higher training. In 1902, however, the DRC started its own Institution at Mvera.¹³ At its inception, the

¹¹Ibid.

¹²For the location of these as well as all other mission stations referred to in subsequent sections of this Chapter, see Map No. 2.

¹³Rep. Ed. Dept., 1931, p. 21. From "A Brief Sketch of Education in the Dutch Reformed Church Mission" by the Rev. Dr. W. H. Murray. Dr. Murray was the DRC's Superintendent in Nyasaland from 1900 to 1937. See also undated and anonymously written pamphlet "The D.R.C. Mission in Nyasaland: 1889-1939."

Overtoun Institute was the model. The work at Mvera included teacher training, the preparation of evangelists, a modest theological course, and a variety of industrial and craft departments.

In its Industrial work, the DRC differed from Livingstonia in that it emphasized the development of skills in traditional Cewa crafts together with innovative trades such as carpentry, bricklaying and printing. In particular, emphasis was placed upon those crafts such as pottery, and basket and mat weaving which were economically viable and would contribute to the stimulation of a cash economy.¹⁴

To this policy was coupled a growing reluctance on the part of the Mission to teach English, much less conduct classes in English. Taken together, these attitudes seemed to indicate a developing philosophy which looked more to the improvement of society within an essentially traditional and conservative context, rather than full participation in the economic and social systems introduced by Europeans.

¹⁴ For background to this aspect of the DRC's activities as well as for much else pertaining to that mission's educational development generally, I am greatly indebted to the late J. L. Pretorius, for many years a leading educational missionary for the DRC in Nyasaland and latterly, Northern Rhodesia. I had the honour of a series of most informative conversations with him in Malawi during the course of 1966.

With the passage of time, this policy became increasingly irksome and frustrating to the more ambitious and individualistic of the DRC's pupils.¹⁵ In a sense, however, the Mission was pioneering what was to become a popular educational trend in the years following the First World War.

In 1912, W. Hofmeyr, an experienced educationist and university graduate, took charge of the Normal School. In the same year the Mission's headquarters was transferred some twenty miles due south of Mvera to Mkhoma.¹⁶ There, a healthful and picturesque site had been selected situated at an altitude of 5,000 feet and located just off the main road to the North, midway between Dodza and Lilongwe.

By 1910 the DRC had established more European-staffed Stations (8) than any other mission in the country and their 34 European missionaries were outnumbered only

¹⁵In the 1920's, this refusal of the DRC to emphasize the teaching of English in its schools was turned to good advantage by the Rev. Hanock Msokera Phiri who was at that time in the process of establishing a mission in the neighbouring Kasungu district under the auspices of the African Methodist Episcopal Church. See Map No. 3, and for a more detailed treatment, the section on the AME in Chapter VIII.

¹⁶Rep. Ed. Dept., 1931, p. 21.

by the UMCA's 46. Both their 244 schools and their average attendance of 18,598 pupils were second only to Livingstonia.¹⁷ The DRC had yet, however, to introduce the payment of fees for education.

One lead given by Livingstonia that the DRC did follow in the years just before the First World War was the introduction of a system of African school inspectors. These men were selected from among the most able teachers and were each given between eight and twelve schools to supervise. They visited each of these in turn "twice a quarter, and reported to the Station after each round; so that when the head of the Station moved about the district he often knew just what to expect at the different schools."¹⁸ These inspectors provided the village school teachers with guidance and encouragement in addition to keeping the Mission's European authorities abreast of progress in the schools.¹⁹

¹⁷ Report of the Third General Missionary Conference of Nyasaland Held at Mvera, 30th July to 7th August, 1910. See table on p. 87.

¹⁸ Rep. Ed. Dept., 1931, p. 21.

¹⁹ For an authoritative treatment, although written a generation later, see J. G. Steytler, Educational Adaptations with Reference to African Village Schools with Special Reference to Central Nyasaland (London, 1939), in particular the Preface and Chapter IX.

The Roman Catholics

In 1911 there was a major reorganization of the entire Central African mission field in which the Roman Catholic missions were operating. The Apostolic Vicariate of Nyasa was subdivided to form the Vicariate of Bangweolo situated entirely in Northern Rhodesia, and the Vicariate of Nyasa. This latter included the whole of Nyasaland north of Dedza together with the East Luangwa Province of Northern Rhodesia. These two Vicariates comprised the sphere of activity of the White Fathers.²⁰ Nyasaland south of Dedza remained as it had been since 1903, the Apostolic Vicariate of Shire and the domain of the Montfort Marist Fathers.²¹

Teacher training had been carried on at all Stations of the White Fathers between 1903 and 1910. In 1909, "middle" classes had been established at Ntakataka. The following year it was decided to consolidate the White Fathers' teacher training classes. In 1911 the school was moved from Ntakataka to Mua which rapidly assumed the position of the White Fathers' Head Station. A workshop had

²⁰ Rep. Ed. Dept., 1931, pp. 19-21. From "Notes on the White Fathers' Mission and Its Educational Work in Nyasaland Since Its Inception," by the Rev. Father Paradis.

²¹ Rep. Ed. Dept., 1931, p. 23. From "Historical Survey of the Montfort Marist Fathers' Mission" by the Rev. Father J. Swelsen. But see also MRC: File covering the history of the Mission prior to 1927.

been established there in 1909 and in 1911 a White Sisters' Home was founded. This was followed in 1912 by the opening of a seminary in which both English and Latin were taught. Many of the early students dropped out of the comparatively rigorous theological course offered by the seminary, but the majority of them remained in the Mission's service as village schoolteachers. The rapid growth of the White Fathers' educational work, quantitatively speaking, can be seen from the following table.

<u>Year</u>	<u>Stations</u>	<u>Europeans</u>	<u>African</u>	<u>Teachers</u>	<u>Schools</u>	<u>Boys</u>	<u>Girls</u>
1903	3	14	25	26	1,620	1,340	
1909	3	15	50	41	2,619	1,340	
1910	4	17	119	96	3,879	2,691	
1911	5	18	152	133	4,490	3,004	
1912	5	25	239	190	7,718	3,079	
1915	6	31	202*	382	11,000	6,923	22

*It will be noted that with the outbreak of World War I there was a certain falling off in the numbers of African teachers due to the exigencies of wartime conditions. This was in marked contrast to the continued expansion of both schools and enrolled pupils.

Undoubtedly this represented a dramatic increase, but it should be noted that towards the close of this period a trend was becoming evident that was to be the cause of much ill-will between Protestant and Catholic missions in the years following the First World War. This lay in the

²² This table compiled from statistics cited in Rep. Ed. Dept., 1931, pp. 20-21.

seemingly uncontrolled proliferation of village schools whose numbers were increasing at a pace greater than the capacity of the White Fathers to supply teachers to staff them despite the acknowledged modest level at which African teachers were then permitted to teach.

The growth of the Marist Fathers' Mission was comparable, with but one noticeable variation. Located as they were in the midst of the densest concentration of European population, they found themselves faced together with their other difficulties with the problem of miscegenation. Addressing themselves to the consequences of this social problem, a group of Sisters who were affiliated with the Marist Fathers responded by opening a boarding school for half-caste girls at Nguludi near Limba. A similar school was subsequently opened by the Fathers for half-caste boys.²³

As the Mission's Stations grew in number, each was made responsible for the training of its own catechists and the organization of its own village schools. As a result, the Marist Fathers appear to have been somewhat behind their northern colleagues at this stage in the provision of teacher training facilities. Their schools, in consequence, were somewhat more elementary in terms of the curriculum they offered.

²³ Rep. Ed. Dept., 1931, p. 23.

The UMCA

In 1912 the Mission's central Teacher Training College was transferred to Likoma Island where it has continued to function to the present day. The College had at first been conducted on board the steamers Charles Jansen and Chauncey Maples. Subsequently, it had been temporarily removed to Kanga in Portuguese East Africa as a result of the unsettled conditions obtaining along the southeastern lakeshore in the early 1890's. The Chauncey Maples continued to be used for the purpose of offering refresher courses to teachers who had been assigned for some years to service in village schools.

At Likoma, some 90 students pursued a two-year teacher training course. The previous practice of sending the brighter boys to the UMCA's St. Andrews College at Zanzibar was discontinued. The Central College for teacher training was now combined with the Theological College which had been started at Likoma in 1905. Women as well as men were enrolled in the Central College. The island's comparative isolation simplified the problem of social control over the girls, a problem that loomed as large in the eyes of the girls' parents as it did in those of the missionaries.

In addition to Likoma, by 1915 the UMCA maintained substantial stations at Kota-Kota, Mponda's and Malindi. The Mission administered some 61 village schools with a combined average attendance of over 2,500 pupils among whom there was an appreciably higher proportion of girls than in most other missions operating in Nyasaland.²⁴

The Industrial Missions

Of the Industrial Missions, with which for convenience are included the SDA and the SAGM, the greatest growth was demonstrated during this period by the first to be established, the ZIM, and by the last, the SDA.

The ZIM, in addition to extending its work into the area adjacent to Ncheu dominated by the Ngoni under the rule of Chief Gomani, continued its policy of devolving educational authority upon Africans as rapidly as practicable. The Mission's Normal School, originally established at Ntonda in the lowlands some twenty miles

²⁴ Rep. Ed. Dept., 1931, p. 18. From "Some Notes on the Educational Work of the Universities Mission to Central Africa" by the Rev. Canon Victor. But see also, Report of the Third General Missionary Conference of Nyasaland Held at Mvera, 30th July to 7th August, 1910. Table on p. 87. For a more general treatment, see G. H. Wilson, A History of the Universities' Mission to Central Africa (London, 1936). See also PRO: C.O. 525, No. 66. Oral evidence given by the Right Rev. Bishop Fisher of the UMCA before the Commission of Inquiry into the Nyasaland Rising of 1915.

southeast of Ncheu, was shifted to Muluma in the more invigorating climate of the hills to the north of Ncheu.

Substantial crops of coffee and cotton continued to be produced by the Mission's plantations. The profits deriving from their sale contributed appreciably to the support of the more than 100 African teacher/evangelists working in the field for a salary of roughly ten shillings a month. By 1914 almost 100 schools had been established with a total average attendance of just over 2,000. These relatively small enrollments possessed the virtue of enabling the pupils to receive more individual attention than proved possible in the much larger village schools maintained by most other missions.²⁵

The Seventh-day Adventists opened two additional Stations staffed by Europeans during this period, at Matandani in 1908 and at Tekerani in 1911. The former was located midway between Blantyre and Ncheu; the latter some twenty miles south of Malamulo.²⁶ The SDA in common

²⁵ Rep. Ed. Dept., 1931, p. 24. From "Short Historical Notes on the Zambosi Industrial Mission" by the Rev. J. S. Ferguson. See also PRO: C.O. 525, No. 66. Oral evidence given by Mr. John Chorley of the ZIM before the Commission of Inquiry into the Nyasaland Rising of 1915. For further insights into the development of this as well as the other industrial missions during this period, see Shepperson & Price, op. cit.

²⁶ V. E. Robinson, "History of Nyasaland Union of S.D.A.," unpublished typescript, 1952, pp. 14-16.

with the majority of these smaller missions (and several larger) gave pride of place within their educational framework to the needs of evangelism. "Every teacher is a preacher," Pastor Rogers was wont to say.²⁷ It was not until some years after the First World War that the SDA's attitude towards education was to change markedly. Towards the close of the pre-War period, however, greater interest was taken in the general education of women and girls. A Miss E. Edie arrived to supervise this aspect of the Mission's work. She was possessed of considerable experience in Nyasaland already, as prior to "accepting the third angel's message" she had worked with the Church of Scotland Mission in Blantyre since 1891.²⁸

With the conversion of their Industrial School at Cholo to Teacher Training in 1907, the NIM shifted its emphasis to village vernacular schools as a means, primarily, of spreading the Gospel. From four schools in 1907, the number grew by 1915 to 38 with a daily attendance of 3,200 pupils. These schools were all linked with one

²⁷ Ibid.

²⁸ Ibid., pp. 18-19. For further detail, see PRO: C.O. 525, No. 66. Oral evidence given by Mr. C. Robinson of the SDA before the Commission of Inquiry into the Nyasaland Rising of 1915. Also, see Rep. Ed. Dept., 1932, p. 17. From "A Brief Historical Survey of the Education Work of the South-East African Union Mission of Seventh-day Adventists" by Rev. G. Pearson.

of the two Stations staffed by European missionaries that the NIM maintained at Likubula, near Blantyre, and at Cholo.²⁹

Sharing with the NIM an essentially evangelistic approach to education as well as their Baptist faith, was the BIM. Its sphere of operations, like that of the ZIM, centered on Nchou. Its two European staffed Stations were located at Gowa and Dzunje, both sited in the healthful uplands and located on either side of the ZIM's Muluma Station. The BIM maintained a total of 33 village schools with an average attendance of about 2,500 pupils.³⁰

The SAGM, it will be recalled, was preeminent in its conception of education as the handmaiden to religious conversion. This mission, the sole occupant of the southernmost area of Nyasaland, transferred its headquarters in 1909 from Lulwa to Chididi, some eight miles to the west of present-day Nsanje. A boarding school was opened at Chididi for the training of village school teachers but the Mission remained modest both in its

²⁹ Rep. Ed. Dept., 1931, p. 22. From "Brief Historical Survey of Educational Work in the Nyasa Mission" by the Rev. H. E. Osborn.

³⁰ PRO: C.O. 525, No. 66. Oral evidence given by Mr. Alexander Smith of the BIM before the Commission of Inquiry into the Nyasaland Rising of 1915.

aspirations and in its attainments. By 1910 only three schools were in operation with a total attendance of 113 pupils and in 1914 the Lulwe Station was closed down altogether as a result of a severe famine in the area and the resultant dispersal of the local populace.³¹

Government Attitudes to Education

What was the attitude of Government to all this educational ferment and activity? Essentially it was benevolent; occasionally more actively positive. This was particularly so in the case of certain District Officers, or Magistrates as they were then called, who in several instances lent their time, energy and advice to the setting up of schools in areas not previously reached by education. In August, 1911 the Governor himself, Sir William Manning, paid a visit to the Overtoun Institution together with his wife and an official party. The occasion was seized upon for the ceremonial opening by Lady Manning of the Gordon Memorial Hospital. The Governor personally visited the classrooms including those of the evening school while classes were in progress and

³¹Rep. Ed. Dept., 1931, p. 22. From "Short Historical Survey of the Educational Work of the South Africa General Mission in Nyasaland" by the Rev. A. R. Brown.

generally "showed his deep interest in all he saw,"³² and "there and then offered an annual prize to the best scholar."³³ In 1912, Manning returned to Livingstonia to present this first "Governor's prize" and took the occasion to tell the assembled students "how many great men had begun life by attending an evening school. 'By hard and steady work,' he assured them, 'you can do much for Nyasaland.'" Referring subsequently to the Governor's visit Laws commented that "Such a personal touch has a wonderful influence on the African, who is concrete to a fault and prefers a man to an abstraction of Government."³⁴

Nevertheless, prior to about 1910, Government interest had been negligible in the education of the people over whom they exercised political authority and to a marked extent, economic and social control. Only gradually did this interest increase following the transfer of responsibility for the Protectorate from the Foreign Office to the Colonial Office. The expanding requirements of both Government and the European settler community for a variety of skilled and semi-skilled labour contributed, however, to a quickening of this interest as the twentieth century moved

³²CS: Overtoun Institute Diary.

³³Livingstone, op. cit., p. 341.

³⁴Ibid., p. 344.

into its second decade. In addition, a more specific spur was the need to compile a Report for the Imperial Education Conference scheduled for 1913.

Responsibility for the preparation of this Report was given to Mr. T. C. Casson, Superintendent of Native Affairs, in lieu of the absence of a Department of Education. The Report, as it subsequently emerged, was essentially a straightforward description of the educational work being done by the Missions, laying stress on the contributions of the two Scottish missions and of the DRC.³⁵

Throughout the Report considerable pains were taken to clarify the Government's degree of involvement (or non-involvement) in education. The Educational Board³⁶ was described as possessing no statutory powers. Stress was placed upon its advisory nature enabling its member missions to work along more or less similar lines and to "approach" Government on educational matters. Government recognized the Board "within certain [unstated] limits." The Report added that "there are no district or municipal

³⁵ CL: Imperial Education Conference Papers. Taken from "III: Educational Systems of the Chief Colonies not Possessing Responsible Government," Education in the Nyasaland Protectorate (London, HMSO, 1915).

³⁶ Established as a result of the United Missionary Conference held at Blantyre in October, 1904.

committees connected in any way with education."³⁷

With regard to the detailed educational activities of the various missions, it was stated that "there is no system by which the Government recognizes schools or classes as efficient apart from recognition for the purposes of grants. . . . There is no inspection of schools by Government but only by agents of the Missions" and that "There are no regulations made by Government as to the curriculum."³⁸ The Report noted that missions received grants from Government solely for "primary" and "technical" education, the latter being distinguished from "secondary"³⁹ education.

Confirmation was given to the fact that "not more than 20% of the central school pupils⁴⁰ take the higher education course" and that these all "bind themselves to

³⁷ CL: Education in the Nyasaland Protectorate, from paragraph II--Controlling Agencies.

³⁸ Ibid., from paragraph IV--Secondary and Technical Education.

³⁹ By employing the term "secondary," Government thereby contributed to the perpetuation of this misnomer. The level referred to consisted simply of Standards 4, 5 and 6.

⁴⁰ This refers to those students who had completed Standard 3, themselves probably comprising at this time less than 10% of the total number of pupils enrolled in mission schools.

learn a trade or to become teachers over a period of six years."⁴¹

Some interesting points were made under the heading "General Observations." It was stated that "Today, most of the present generation can read and a very large number can write in the vernacular." To substantiate this claim it was cited that "some 102,000 letters [arrive] on the average by each mail" sent by Nyasas who had travelled south in search of work to their friends and relatives at home.⁴²

Casson referred also to a "growing tendency" for scholars to leave school after passing Standard 3. He attributed this to the disinclination of students to leave their homes for the Central Mission Institutions where they will "work under strange masters besides having to bind themselves to learn some trade for a period of six years." He concluded that "they are slow to leave their homes for a number of years."⁴³

This seems open to question when it is appreciated that students completing their village school education

⁴¹CL: Education in the Nyasaland Protectorate, from paragraph III--Elementary or Primary Schools.

⁴²Ibid., from paragraph IX--General Observations.

⁴³Ibid.

would very likely have to leave their homes in order to attend Standards 1 to 3 in the District Station schools. Moreover, a disinclination for foreign travel did not appear to be widespread judging by the substantial numbers of educated and semi-educated Nyasas who regularly migrated southwards in search of employment. There they accepted with seeming equanimity a far greater degree of uncertainty regarding living conditions than did those students who in progressing to the Central Institution of their mission were certain of finding relatives or friends and an atmosphere with which they were already generally familiar.

Rather it appears more likely that the primary deterrent to a pupil's further education was the expense involved. As the Casson Report states, the two Scottish missions charged an entrance fee for boarders of £1, followed by annual fees varying from five shillings to ten shillings per annum.⁴⁴ These sums were simply beyond the reach of the majority of the people and although exceptions with regard to the rate payable were undoubtedly made, the principle was firmly established. As a result, there were numerous cases of young men working for a period of time in the south before returning to the

⁴⁴ Ibid., from paragraph III--Elementary or Primary Schools.

Protectorate with the funds necessary to complete their education.

Casson concluded his Report with a passage embodying his overall attitude to African education. Since these remarks may fairly be considered to be representative of enlightened contemporary official thinking, they are quoted in full.

The opinion is sometimes heard in Nyasaland as in other parts of Africa that the native should not be educated. This opinion as a rule emanates from those who look upon the native as an animal merely who should be so trained and instructed as to render him useful in a continual life of hard manual work performed for Europeans. This would be so obviously unjust that further comment is not necessary. The ideal system of education for natives is undoubtedly a combination of literacy and technical instruction. It has been proved here over and over again, that the character of the native, which is so easily moulded for good or for evil has by education been so formed as to keep him straight, honest and law-abiding besides teaching him that work is a rational condition of life and generally making him a happy and willing worker.⁴⁵

Another aspect of Government concern with African education at this time relates to the proposal to inaugurate a Native Civil Service. This possibility had been discussed at length. It was felt that the benefits afforded by such a permanent Service in terms of security of tenure, regular salary increments, and provision for

⁴⁵ Ibid., from paragraph IX--General Observations.

pensions would enable Government to stem the flow of the most capable and enterprising school-leavers to the cities, mines, and farms of the South.⁴⁶

At first the question of establishing a Training School for the purpose of preparing suitable candidates had been mooted. This suggestion was received by the Treasury, however, with a marked lack of enthusiasm, and as a result it was decided to submit to the Secretary of State for approval a system of student clerkships.⁴⁷ These Student Clerks were to be nominated by the missions on the basis of their academic work together with an appraisal of their character. They would then be seconded to the several Government departments from whence they would be recruited into the ranks of the Native Civil Service by means of competitive examination as vacancies should arise.⁴⁸ No final decision had yet been taken as to the implementation of this scheme by the outbreak of World War I.

⁴⁶ NLS: Colonial Office Annual Reports, No. 692 Nyasaland Protectorate: 1910-1911. X--Native Affairs, paragraph 49. See also PRO: C.O. No. 626. Minutes of Executive Council Meeting held at Zomba, 4 September, 1911.

⁴⁷ PRO: C.O. No. 626. Minutes of Executive Council Meeting held at Zomba, 14 October, 1913. Item No. 353, Native Civil Service.

⁴⁸ Ibid.

Towards the close of the pre-War period, in late April, 1914, a session of the Executive Council devoted a considerable amount of time to the subject of education and to its own "Policy in Regard to Missions."⁴⁹ Much of the Council's time was taken up with such practical questions as the right of missions to build schools and teachers' houses on Crown Land and the exemption from hut tax of such buildings.

Of more significance, perhaps, was the attitude adopted by the Council towards the increase in rivalry and competition between the missions, particularly among those operating in the densely populated Shire Highlands. Government expressed itself as concerned by the effect of this rivalry "upon the native and upon the maintenance of public order," and it was decided that the Council's "policy in the future might be more effectively directed to the prevention of a competition between missions which might be calculated to lead to strife and a breach of the peace."⁵⁰

⁴⁹ PRO: C.O. No. 626. Minutes of Executive Council Meeting held at Zomba, 27, 28, 29 April, 1914. M.P. 173/14, Government Policy in Regard to Missions.

⁵⁰ Ibid.

With this end in view "it was considered that the following steps might be taken." Summarized, they were as follows.

1. A fuller enquiry both as to the desire of the inhabitants of a given village for the ministrations or secular teaching of the mission proposing to establish itself, the quality of the teaching to be imparted and the capacity of the proposed teachers. This was to be undertaken before permission would be granted to build upon Crown Land.
2. No site agreement would be entered into without Government approval following an enquiry by the local Resident.
3. The site agreement might be cancelled if there was any breach of the peace.
4. In the event of a breach of the peace the education grant might be withheld or decreased.⁵¹

Gradually, Government was being drawn to take a closer look at the Protectorate's expanding educational system, loosely organized though it still was. Within the year, the Chilembwe Rising was to stimulate a far more searching enquiry than had yet been contemplated.

⁵¹Ibid. It should be noted that throughout this period Government's total Grant-in-Aid of Education remained static at £1,000.

The Outbreak of World War I

The northernmost part of Nyasaland was the first area to be directly affected by the War. In fact, the only fighting that actually took place upon Nyasa soil was confined in space to the northern tip of the country, and in time to the first few months of the War. This is not to say, however, that all external pressures were removed following the repulse of the German forces at Karonga; quite the contrary.

Livingstonia was particularly hard-hit. Although the Germans had been driven back within their own frontiers, much of German East Africa continued to be an active front throughout the War.⁵² The route north from the Zambezi via the Shire River and Lake Nyasa served as the primary line of supply for the Allied forces operating throughout the southern provinces of German East Africa. As a result, Kondowe and its environs became the logical focus for African recruitment. This operated on two levels.

Most widespread in its impact was the need for hundreds, and in time thousands, of able-bodied males as "tenga-tenga" or carriers. These men performed an

⁵² For a colorful description of the campaign, see Brian Gardner, German East (London, 1965). For a more detailed portrayal of Nyasaland's contribution, see H. Moyse-Bartlett, The King's African Rifles (London, 1956).

indispensable role in transporting the never-ending flow of supplies to the fighting troops in the field. Food, ammunition, medical equipment; all had to be brought from the northern lakeshore across the floodplain and over the hills to wherever the Allied forces were currently encamped. As the War dragged on, the need for more and more carriers became imperative. With demand outrunning supply, the conditions of service for these men became intolerable in terms of consecutive hours worked and in the weight of the loads carried.

But perhaps of greater moment with regard to the functioning of the Mission was the fact that Livingstonia was rapidly stripped of its teachers at all levels. The quality of their education made them invaluable in a host of tasks varying from service as personal aides to senior European officers through a range of occupations as interpreters, medical orderlies, company clerks and non-commissioned officers. Moreover, their close association with the Mission made them highly susceptible to recruitment in an area where there was no demonstrable alternative.

The Mission was also affected by a steady secondment of her European missionaries to Government service as Doctors, "tenga-tenga" Supervisors, and temporary

replacements for civil servants, thus freeing the latter for more active service at the front. While opposed to war in principle, Livingstonia's missionaries felt a sympathetic commitment in fact, seeing this war as "a fight between the devil and all that makes for the well-being of man."⁵³ As a result they lent the weight of their influence to Government's recruitment policies even though as the War continued they became "fully aware of the appalling suffering involved."⁵⁴

In time, not perhaps unnaturally, this was to cause widespread resentment among Livingstonia's wider family of church members, students, and their dependent relatives and villages. Throughout this early period, however, there was a certain enthusiasm for the British cause, not as yet overlaid by thoughtful consideration of what benefits might or might not accrue to those Nyasas giving it their active support.⁵⁵

⁵³For this, together with the following quote, I am indebted to K. J. McCracken. They appear on p. 342 of his unpublished Ph.D. thesis, "Livingstonia Mission and the Evolution of Malawi, 1875-1939." For this quote, McCracken cites Elmslie to Hetherwick, 15 December, 1914, from Zomba: Hetherwick Papers.

⁵⁴Ibid. For this quote, McCracken cites Zomba: NNC 3/4/2. Resident's monthly Report, 28 February, 1918.

⁵⁵To cite but one instance taking place soon after the outbreak of war in which a Scot who had but recently returned home from a visit to Nyasaland received a letter from an African teacher stationed at Karonga. In this, the teacher noted, according to the recipient "with manifest relish" that "The Germans said to their men, 'Let us go to Karonga and scare away the birds' [British forces] but the Germans were the birds and they got the scare!" For this, see J. H. Morrison, Forty Years in Darkest Africa (Edinburgh, 1917), p. 15.

CHAPTER IV

"POINT TO MOROCCO"

The Beginnings of African Self-assertion and the Results of the Chilembwe Rising

Their very discontent is a measure of their progress.¹

The missionaries have sown the dragon's teeth of education.²

This chapter will attempt to indicate some aspects of the impact the introduction of Western European education had upon those Nyasas who grasped the opportunities offered to them. The several ways in which these men responded to this educational stimulus will then be illustrated.

Perhaps the most far-reaching difference between traditional and mission education lay in their emphasis, respectively, upon the group and upon the individual. A contemporary Malawian educator notes that there were similarities. The aim of both was to "train children to be

¹Lord Lugard, The Dual Mandate in British Tropical Africa (London, 1922), p. 618, cited in Shepperson & Price, Independent African (Edinburgh, 1958), p. 437.

²Shepperson & Price, p. 380, citing an article by Sir Harry Johnston entitled "The Bitter Cry of the Educated African" appearing in the New Statesman for 8 July, 1916, p. 321.

good citizens; good members of society."³ But while the Missions attempted to accomplish this goal by stressing individual salvation and fulfillment in the context of a universal Church, traditional educators concerned themselves narrowly with the pupil's integration into a specific, circumscribed society with its beliefs, customs and organization only locally applicable. And yet, while acknowledging the value of literacy and of the attainment of new technical skills as means by which the general standard of living may be raised, this same Malawian educator warns that "Disturbance of traditional tribal [life] is a different matter and it needs discussion."⁴

This conflict between an emphasis on the group and on the individual is stressed by Diedrich Westermann when he writes that "The African educates his child for life in the community. This is the real meaning and the strength of his educational methods and aims." But Westermann goes on to observe that "Here also lies their weakness since attention is focussed on the group and is apt to neglect the individual. The child is not regarded as a developing personality but as a member of the group."

³ See Appendix A, "The History of Education in Malawi."

⁴ Ibid.

"European education, on the other hand," Westermann continues, "has in abundance the personal and individualistic note lacking in the Native educational idea. African tribal life and European school education are in their present forms incompatible. . . . The older people in Africa feel it strongly. When nevertheless they send their children to school it is because they realize that it is impossible for them to stem the rising tide and that a new world is coming."⁵

"A new world is coming." From the turn of the century onwards the door had been opened to an increasing number of Africans anxious to move from a tribally oriented, non-literate society and from an economy based on subsistence agriculture and lacking in technology, to the attainment of a standard of living and the possession of a degree of theoretical and applied knowledge that would have been inconceivable to even the previous generation. With this there came on the part of some a developing self-awareness, a consciousness of individuality, and a search for the means of self-expression.

As has been remarked, the initial reaction of the African to the education proffered tended to be one of

⁵ Diedrich Westermann, The African Today and Tomorrow (Oxford, 1949), pp. 101-102.

gingerly scepticism and apathy shading into suspicious hostility. This was partly attributable to an unfamiliarity with the processes involved, but there was also the puzzling zealousness with which the missionaries pressed education upon them.

Gradually the reserve of some was overcome by their growing awareness that in the "gifts" and "prizes" proffered in return for attendance, something tangible was to be gained. In the course of time the wonder of books "speaking" to one, and letters as "silent messengers" was impressed upon a minority who discovered that their newfound mastery of the ^mMzundu's magic gave them a certain status within their communities. This status was reinforced by their adoption, with missionary encouragement, of the more obvious trappings and manners of the Europeans. The donning of Western clothing, the mastery of knife and fork, and in particular the acquisition of a smattering of English; all combined to set these individuals apart together with their material wealth, vast when judged by the austere standards of village life.

As enthusiasm for education grew, the Missions shrewdly put a price upon it. This simultaneously provided them with a sorely needed source of additional revenue

while substantially raising the value of education in the eyes of the people who retained, perhaps, a certain scepticism regarding the fundamental value of anything given for nothing.

As the numbers of educated Nyasas increased, the feeling developed among this rising intelligentsia that they were gaining neither the material wealth nor the degree of responsibility they regarded as commensurate with their attainments. To a limited extent, this unease was present as early as the mid-1890's and it is from this time that the dissent of the "New Men," may be dated.

It is not coincidental that the mid-1890's saw as well the arrival of the first small "independent" and non-denominational missions. Behind the majority of them, the guiding force was Joseph Booth.⁶ His contribution to the history of Nyasaland lies not so much in the educational establishments he helped to create, as in the fresh concepts of the African's worth vis-à-vis the European that he introduced at a time when a handful of Africans in Nyasaland were starting to question the assumptions on

⁶For the fullest treatment, see Shepperson & Price. But also see Emily Booth Langworthy, This Africa Was Mine (Stirling, 1952) written by Booth's daughter, and Joseph Booth, Africa for the Africans (Baltimore, 1897).

which the missions based their policies: educational, evangelical, and otherwise. At a time when many missionaries, particularly those in the service of the smaller missions and those in residence at the more remote outstations, still had to resort to forms of bribery, subterfuge and persuasion even partially to fill their classrooms, an increasing number of students at the other end of the scale chafed at what they regarded as a consciously imposed bar to their educational progress--so far, and no farther.

The attitude of the UMCA in regarding itself as an evangelising body first and foremost might be cited. In substantiation of this viewpoint the UMCA "did not want to advance education beyond a certain point generally. Boys were apt to get swollen heads through over-education and were consequently spoilt."⁷ Other missions, notably the SAGM, made no bones about their lack of emphasis upon education.

At Livingstonia this outlook was not so prevalent, though finding sympathetic consideration in some quarters.

⁷Zomba: SI/1494/19. File dealing with a conference on education held in 1919. Cited in an unpublished paper by K. J. McCracken, "Livingstonia Mission and the Origins of the Watch Tower Movement in Central Africa," p. 2.

But there was another problem, that of fees. As the Rev. MacAlpine remarked in 1898, "School fees were demanded for the first time at Bandawe. The sum required was only three-pence a term, but Government hut taxes had been started at the same time and 'many people' thought they were in for a fleecing."⁸

At the same time, Africans were coming more and more to resent the discipline and what seemed to them the inordinately high standards demanded by the Scottish missions. These missions did not provide a sufficiently swift and painless road to the status they desired. Moreover, the educated or semi-educated African was encountering difficulties implicit in the attempt to reconcile his traditional social attitudes with those imposed by an alien society. This was again particularly true in the case of the Scottish Presbyterian missions with their Calvinist conception of Christianity and their emphasis on changing society as well as on changing its individual members.

Towards the end of the century this resentment became increasingly apparent. Cases of "insubordination" at the Livingstonia Mission increased rapidly. To cite but one example in which an individual fell "from the highest

⁸ McCracken, ibid., p. 6, citing Livingstonia Report, 1898-1899, p. 15.

position obtainable here to almost the lowest possible": a certified teacher and one of five enrolled in the Theological Course attempted to justify what was apparently regarded as lax sexual behaviour "by propounding an Antimonian law of Christian liberty, which he did in a long paper submitted to the session."⁹

This example, though perhaps not typical, points up the fact that it was those students with the maximum of initiative, imagination and resource who were most likely to dissent and break away. Whether these qualities were simply inherent in the individuals concerned, or whether they were a product of missionary education and the inculcation at Livingstonia of the principles of free thought, is a debatable point. The fact remains that freedom of thought is indivisible and once encouraged must take its course.

This factor has received ample attention in reference to the attractions of the first African independent churches. Professor Terence Ranger in a recent article has commented that "the importance of educational revolt

⁹Shepperson Collection: Livingstonia Report, 1900, pp. 5-6. Cited by K. J. McCracken, "Livingstonia as an Industrial Mission, 1875-1900," in Religion in Africa (Edinburgh, 1964), p. 95. (Mimeographed.)

in producing some of the independent church movements of East and Central Africa has perhaps been underestimated." He notes that "a good deal of independency in Nyasaland must be seen in the context of educational resentment,"¹⁰ and adds that "the desire for freedom from mission control contained as 'a cardinal element' the desire for educational freedom."¹¹

That the educational facilities of the Protectorate were both too confining and too expensive from the point of view of the more advanced pupils can be seen from the history of the Booth-inspired missions. These drew many Africans to them at least partially because they seemed to offer a free education. Thus, while at first glance it may appear premature to dwell at length upon these increasing tendencies of self-assertion and independence of mind on the part of what was admittedly a numerically tiny élite, it is perhaps demonstrable that its members possessed an importance disproportionate to their numbers.

¹⁰T. O. Ranger, "African Attempts to Control Education in East and Central Africa, 1900-1939," in Past & Present, No. 32, December, 1965, p. 80.

¹¹Ibid., and citing Shepperson & Price, p. 162.

Joseph Booth as Catalyst

No firm time or place can be said to have marked the inauguration of this spirit, just as the Chilembwe Rising and its aftermath serve but to provide a convenient if significant chapter ending. In so far as there may be said to have been a beginning, however, one might select a Petition drafted in 1899 by Booth.¹²

This Petition was intended "to influence the Powers That Be in favour of a suggested Native Policy more in keeping with the Commandments of God than the present." The Petition included five provisions, two of which dealt directly with education. The five are perhaps worth quoting in full in order to indicate the revolutionary nature of the Petition in the context of the times.

1st The entire amount of the hut tax collected in the Protectorate should be spent on African education to the point of equality with the average British education.

2nd A pledge should be given by the Government to the effect that the Protectorate should never pass from the direct control of the British

¹² PRO: C.O. 525, No. 66: Nyasaland, 1916, Vol. 1, Despatches 1st January to 7th February, for the full text. Also, see Shepperson & Price, pp. 118-121.

Home Government unless it be to restore the Territory to a Government approved by the people as a whole.

3rd Free higher education should be provided for not less than 5% of the African population in order to qualify a proportion for Government, professional, mechanical and mercantile positions.

4th The whole Protectorate should revert to African ownership after a maximum of some 21 years.

5th Africans from Nyasaland should not be forced to bear arms against neighbouring tribes or fellow Africans elsewhere in the continent.

That Government took a very dim view of these suggestions can readily be appreciated. None of them were even partially implemented and Booth himself lay under an order of deportation some months until he formally recanted and provided satisfactory guarantees for his future good behaviour. The fact remains that the Central African Times did publish the Petition, albeit with highly critical editorial comment.¹³ When one considers as well Booth's many contacts among educated and semi-educated

¹³ EU: Central African Times, Vol. 2, No. 45 (August 5th, 1899) and No. 46 (August 12th, 1899). The newspaper also printed the text of the Petition in full in No. 45.

Africans, the Petition may be said to have had a considerable effect, at least upon those on whose behalf it was drawn up, if not upon those to whom it was directed.

The 1899 Petition has been described by Shepperson and Price as a "fiasco." So in terms of its immediate effect it was, but they go on to point out that as "a more exact formulation" of African demands, "it looked forward to the kind of programme which, so far as can be gathered, Chilembwe was putting forward on the eve of 1915."¹⁴

Official reaction to the Petition is interesting in two instances as an indication of Government's faulty assessment of both the roots and the strength of this growing African disaffection. In a semi-official letter written as late as 1912,¹⁵ Nyasaland's then Deputy-Governor gave evidence of Government's failure to distinguish between the primary resistors who in 1899 had been so recently suppressed, and the secondary resistance of which the Petition was one of the first overt manifestations. In addition, Commissioner Sharpe, by writing disparagingly

¹⁴ Shepperson & Price, p. 118.

¹⁵ Ibid., p. 120, citing "Letter from F. B. Pearce, Government Secretary's Office, Zomba, 28 August 1912, to Rev. Edwin Shaw, Secretary of the American Sabbath Tract Society, Plainfield, N.J. (Seventh Day Baptist Historical Society)."

of "Booth's document," to which he claimed the latter wished "natives to put their marks,"¹⁶ seemed to ignore the substantial body of highly literate Nyasas to whom the Petition would inevitably make the strongest appeal. Instead, Sharpe apparently preferred to console himself with the view that the "natives" were nothing more than a mass of undifferentiated savages.

Several contemporary descriptions survive of Booth and of the impression he made upon those educated Africans, living and working among the environs of Blantyre, with whom he came in contact. The first thing that appears to have struck them was the disparity that existed between his Christian views, strongly held and frequently expressed, and those of his "fellow" Europeans. His preaching was regarded as being "against his own countrymans' preaching" and was "entirely curious and very contradicting."¹⁷ Booth's attitudes towards his fellow missionaries were also carefully noted, in particular, his opinion of those representing the Church of

¹⁶ Zomba: J2/9/2. Cited in Robert I. Rotberg, The Rise of Nationalism in Central Africa (Cambridge, Mass., 1965), p. 65.

¹⁷ PRO: C.O. 525, No. 66. From a written statement submitted to the Commission of Inquiry into the 1915 Rising by M. M. Chisuse, an African member of the Church of Scotland Mission, Blantyre.

Scotland whom he denounced as hypocrites, preaching a Gospel of equality under God's love, but in reality, cheating their parishioners and robbing them of their land. "Using the natives as hoes," was the graphic phrase repeated, while "they themselves [the C. of S. missionaries] getting a lot of money."¹⁸

From the first, Booth seems to have gone out of his way to demonstrate his belief in the equality of man. He did this not only by paying the African employees of the various missions with which he was successively affiliated far more than the current wage, but by frequently taking his meals with Africans and by disdaining even those material benefits and accoutrements of a European's normal daily life that were most commonly accepted.

In addition, from an early stage Booth encouraged those Africans with whom he came in contact to organize themselves in a variety of self-help schemes. As the 1890's drew to a close, he became increasingly convinced that Africans must seek their own salvation; politically and economically, as well as spiritually. He saw no point in their placing reliance upon the prospect of any appreciable advance in the foreseeable future, not, at

¹⁸ Ibid.

any rate, one accepted voluntarily by the dominant European community. In arriving at this judgment, Booth made little distinction between Government, Planters, and Missionaries. To him they were all rogues and exploiters, conferring what minimal benefits as they might upon the Africans, only in order to use them to further their own ends.

"'Rise up and save your country,' was the sentence he almost said [sic] every time we met him," quotes one account.¹⁹ Another adds, with what could be considerable symbolic significance, "Point to Morocco and be blessed."²⁰

Bismarck, although questioned persistently on this point by Grant, the Chairman of the Commission of Inquiry, insisted that he was unaware of the specific meaning. One cannot of course be certain, but a likely explanation presents itself when it is recalled that from 1894 onwards, the French colonial authorities in Morocco and indeed Europeans generally, were subjected to constant pressure

¹⁹ Ibid.

²⁰ PRO: C.O. 525, No. 66. From the oral examination of Joseph Bismarck by the Commission of Inquiry into the 1915 Rising. While described in the transcript of the Commission's proceedings as "a Quilimaine native, Chiwambo, Blantyre," this is of course the same Bismarck who had arrived in the country in the late 1870's, had served both Scottish missions, and had in the mid-1890's established himself as a relatively prosperous market farmer. In 1915 he owned more than 150 acres of land near Blantyre.

from a series of guerrilla attacks led by the proto-nationalist leader Abd-el-Aziz. With this in mind, some credence may be placed upon the view of the Nyasaland Government that Booth's exhortations were actively seditious.

Chisuse further recalled a meeting with Booth at Chinde, at the mouth of the Zambezi, when the latter in company with John Chilembwe was about to embark for the United States. Booth was in a reminiscent mood, and as Chisuse recalls it, "sitting on the sand near the Indian Ocean he said,

'I love the sea because the sea do not tell any lies. Years ago we Europeans used to sail in this ocean onto the coast and got you Africans as slaves and sold you in America. But now the Europeans have got another plan, of just coming to take away the land from you and make you slaves together with the land.'²¹

Certainly the consensus that emerges from an examination of the available records of contemporary African opinion is the feeling that in their eyes Booth bore a not inconsiderable share of the credit and/or responsibility for the Chilembwe Rising, even though at the time of its outbreak he had not set foot in Nyasaland for over a decade.

²¹PRO: C.O. 525, No. 66. From written statement by M. M. Chisuse.

Chilembwe's Early Educational Activities

John Chilembwe "sailed for Africa, June 20th, 1899 . . . after two years spent in Virginia Theological Seminary and College where he devoted himself to hard study."²² He was now an ordained minister and was determined to open his own Mission.

Possessed of moderate financial backing from the prestigious Negro-American National Baptist Convention,²³ Chilembwe was able to purchase a 93-acre site at Mbombwe. This was pleasantly situated on the banks of the Michilu Likubula stream in the shadow of Chiradzulu Mountain, and, as it was to prove, not so pleasantly adjacent to the Estates at Magomero owned by A. L. Bruce.²⁴ Here, some fifteen miles to the east of Blantyre, Chilembwe established the Providence Industrial Mission, soon widely known as the P.I.M.

At once, Chilembwe demonstrated the importance he attached to education by building a schoolhouse and recruiting scholars, and by making known his views in a letter to

²²NEC: The Mission Herald, September, 1901.

²³The National Baptist Convention had been formed in 1895. For its early involvement in mission work in Nyasaland, see numerous references in Shepperson & Price.

²⁴This was Alexander Livingstone Bruce, the son of Alexander Low Bruce and Agnes Livingstone, David Livingstone's daughter. See Shepperson & Price, p. 81.

the Central African Times published within months of his return. Describing his intentions and listing his goals, he remarked that

. . . by giving the children of Africa good training they will be able to possess an indomitable spirits and firm dependance upon God's helping and sustaining hand. And make observations which will be of greatest use to different tribes of African sons, who only need the quickening and enlightening influence of the Gospel of Christ to lift them from this state of degradation, and make them suitable members of the Great human family.²⁵

Before the long rains fell in November a school had been built capable of accommodating 100 students and classes had commenced. Chilembwe, though receiving both moral and financial support from the National Baptist Convention, was at first on his own; but in the spring of 1901 he was joined by the Rev. Landon N. Cheek, an American Negro born and educated in the state of Mississippi.

Cheek's own views on education were expressed in an article published in an American newspaper and subsequently quoted in the Central African Times. Many of Booth's sentiments found a sympathetic echo. For example, Cheek noted that when "the Government will run schools with some of the tax-money used for standing armies and

²⁵ EU: Central African Times for December 8th, 1900. Cited in Shepperson & Price, p. 127.

Imperialism, we can hope for a great change." But, he continued, "Can we expect the foreigners in Africa to plead for higher wages and more education [for Africans] while they still sell barter goods to natives and get the majority of them [to work] for seventy-five cents per month?"²⁶

For a time the P.I.M. grew but gradually, plagued by a shortage of funds and of personnel. In 1902, however, the arrival of another Negro missionary from America, Miss Emma B. Delany, served both to lessen the latter problem and to indicate the continuing interest in the P.I.M. on the part of the National Baptist Convention which stepped up its financial support shortly thereafter.

While the P.I.M. was the first independent African Mission to be established in Nyasaland (following its reopening in 1926 it was one of the two most successful throughout the remainder of the Colonial period) it was not alone. Its example was to influence the thinking of many Nyasas who themselves were initially educated at one of the established Missions. To begin with, however, this was not always the case.

²⁶ Shepperson & Price, pp. 137-138, citing the Central African Times, Vol. 8, No. 49 (September 2nd, 1905) which in turn quotes from The Richmond Planet.

It is reported that upon his return Chilembwe's "first intention was to get almost all the educated boys from the Blantyre district to join him, and do the evangelising work among the natives without any European aid." Alas, "this was a failure, for the educated natives kept to their own old masters."²⁷ The conditioning of decades, particularly in the comparatively affluent and relatively sophisticated environment of the European-dominated Shire Highlands, was as yet proof against intimations of equality. Only a handful of educated Nyasas still in good standing with their original churches ever came over to Chilembwe's camp. For their refusal to do so, they were roundly stigmatized by Chilembwe for their reluctance, as "fools just helping to fill the pockets of the Europeans."²⁸

Before concluding this examination of the evolution of the P.I.M. it may be useful to consider the influence brought to bear upon certain more northerly portions of the country by two other Nyasas, both products of the Livingstonia Mission, and both of whom broke with the Mission during the first decade of this century.

²⁷ PRO; C.O. 525, No. 66. From the written statement by M. M. Chisuse cited above.

²⁸ Ibid.

Elliott Kamwana and Watchtower

Elliott Kenan Kamwana Achirwa²⁹ was a Tonga, born between 1878 and 1882 at Chifira Village in the Bandawe district. He received his early education at the local village school and subsequently at the Bandawe Station School. In March, 1898, he was admitted to the Overtoun Institute³⁰ where he seems to have done well academically, finishing third in his class in 1900.³¹ Shortly thereafter, however, he left the Institute of his own volition. The circumstances surrounding his departure on the available evidence remain unclear; but it appears that his reluctance to pay the required fees was a contributory factor.³² At any rate, he did not remain long at his home at Chifira for by the latter part of 1901 he was with Joseph Booth at the Plainfield Mission south of Cholo.

²⁹For Kamwana's general background, see Shepperson & Price; Rotberg, Rise of Nationalism; and K. J. McCracken, "Livingstonia Mission and the Origins of the Watch Tower Movement in Central Africa," unpublished paper.

³⁰CS: Overtoun Institute Roll Book where Kamwana is listed as No. 234. The numbering system was cumulative, commencing with the opening of the Institute in 1894-1895. Kamwana's name is entered as "Canon Kamwana Aphiri."

³¹MU: Aurora for 1900.

³²This seems to be the general consensus. See Shepperson & Price, p. 154; Rotberg, Rise of Nationalism, p. 66; and several references in unpublished work by McCracken.

There he was baptised, presumably as a Seventh-day Adventist.

For the next five or six years Kamwana kept on the move. He appears to have spent much of this period in South Africa. In 1903 he travelled south with Booth at least as far as Durban, and in 1907 he is known to have rejoined Booth in Cape Town. During the intervening years there is some evidence that he worked for a time in Fort Jameson in Northern Rhodesia.³³

In 1907, Kamwana, still presumably at least a nominal Seventh-day Adventist, proved readily susceptible to the doctrinally marginal variations of the Watchtower Society to which his old mentor Booth had recently been converted. There followed some six months of instruction in the Watchtower teachings before his return in September of 1908 to Nyasaland and to the Bandawe area. There, taking advantage of the "disturbed social situation,"³⁴ which contained elements of anti-missionary feelings as well as manifestations of both inter- and intra-tribal rivalries, he set about providing an attractive alternative to the long-established Livingstonia Mission.

³³CS: Overtoun Institute Roll Book states that "March, 1905, he was engaged at Fort Jameson."

³⁴Shepperson & Price, p. 154.

Kamwana's approach was all-embracing and may be summarized as follows. EVANGELICALLY, he offered rapid, virtually "instant" baptism. This effortless entry into full membership of his church was accomplished dramatically in massive, open-air ceremonies. SOCIALLY, he condoned the traditional dances, beer drinking, and polygamy. MATERIALLY, he opposed all forms of taxation, particularly the hated hut tax. POLITICALLY, he prophesied the downfall of all European authority and the coming of African self-government. EDUCATIONALLY, he advocated the establishment of free schools, open to all.

With the aid of this comprehensive program, Kamwana made considerable headway. Midway through 1909 and shortly before his arrest and deportation from the District, it is estimated that he had baptised between 10,000 and 12,000 people. Most of these converts it is true were either unreconstructed traditionalists who had refused to give up the social practices listed above, or nominal Christians who had grown impatient of the inordinately long probationary period insisted upon by the Livingstonia Mission before full acceptance into the Church. Among those who flocked to Kamwana's meetings in the months following his return from South Africa there

was, however, a fair sprinkling of Livingstonia members.

The latter Mission was quick to state that none of their teachers or senior church functionaries had been seduced. As far as the upper echelons were concerned, those individuals who had attained to a status within the Mission that accorded with their own conception of their abilities, this appears to have been the case. But judging by the evidence of the Institution's roll-book, some 10% of its one-time students appear to have joined Kamwana and Watchtower at some stage.³⁵ Many of these men had either left Overtoun through lack of money to pay their fees or had been sent down for committing some offense. These ranged from "impertinence" and "insubordination" to one or two grave cases in which the culprit was "expelled for committing a nuisance,"³⁶ or even worse; "dismissed for ante-nuptial fornication with his betrothed."³⁷

Nevertheless, there was among this 10% a residue of Mission members in good standing who had spent varying periods at the Institution. But while recognition of this fact is important, it should not be assumed that their allegiance was won by Kamwana on theological grounds alone.

³⁵CS: Based on an examination of the records of over 400 students at the Overtoun Institute as detailed in the Institute's Roll Book.

³⁶CS: As cited in the Roll Book.

³⁷Ibid.

Almost certainly, in the majority of these as in other cases, Watchtower was seen as providing a structured environment in which they might attain greater status and play a more significant role than appeared to be open to them within the framework of the Livingstonia Mission.

It should be remembered that a majority of those affected by Kamwana's proselytizing were Tonga. As Van Velsen and McCracken have pointed out,³⁸ their's was an individualistic society, essentially fluid and democratic, where men were not tied by birth to any particular level of the tribal class structure. On the contrary, they were free to improve their social position vis-à-vis their fellows by means of internal competition.

As to the educational impact of Kamwana's burst of evangelical activity, it soon became clear that the movement embracing Watchtower provided significant advantages only to those who were the prior possessors of a modicum of schooling. As far as establishing a school system of its own, of however limited an efficiency, the movement was unsuccessful. Indeed, the attempt was scarcely made and herein lies a possible reason for Watchtower's comparative lack of impact in the period

³⁸ See J. Van Velsen, The Politics of Kinship (Manchester, 1964), and McCracken, op. cit., in Religion in Africa.

between the Wars when despite Kamwana's continued exile on Mauritius, the movement managed to retain many adherents.

Charles Domingo

Charles Domingo³⁹ like Elliott Kamwana was a product of the Livingstonia Mission. He too left the Mission of his own accord. And yet in his rejection of what had been his home for over a quarter of a century, and in whose service he had risen so high, he may be said to have dealt a far more grievous blow to the Mission's amour propre.

Domingo, as far as can be ascertained and as his name would appear to suggest, was born in Portuguese territory of Kunda stock, probably about the year 1875. While still a young boy he was brought to Nyasaland by William Koyi in 1881 from Quelimaine. There, he had been living on the compound of the African Lakes Company where his drunken father was employed as a cook. Perceiving promise in the youngster, Koyi determined to give him the chance of an education. Domingo's natural intelligence and

³⁹ Again, the most complete treatment is to be found in Shepperson & Price. Useful supplementary information may be found in Rotberg, Rise of Nationalism, in the extensive but as yet unpublished work of McCracken, and in Zomba: Miss: 12/10. This latter, as previously noted, comprises an "Historical Survey of Native Controlled Missions Operating in Nyasaland" prepared, apparently by the Director of Education for the use of the Nyasaland Police, in the autumn of 1940. The relevant section here is that dealing with the Seventh Day Baptist Mission.

apparent potential for academic achievement was soon recognized by Laws himself and the lad soon became something of a protégé.⁴⁰ Accepted into the manse as a houseboy, Charles progressed through the various educational levels provided by the Mission. So successful was he that in 1891, together with a fellow student, Uraiah Chatonda Achirwa, Domingo was sent for two and a half years study at Lovedale College in South Africa at the Cape.⁴¹ With the opening of the Overtoun Institute imminent they were recalled to Livingstonia, and on the 30th of July, 1895, their's were the first two names to be registered in the Institute's roll-book,⁴² entering directly into Standard 5 of the Normal Course.

Domingo completed the Normal Course in September, 1897, and commenced service as a teacher-probationer. At the same time, he enrolled as a student in the Theological Course. Three years later, in September, 1900, he completed this Course and simultaneously his period of probation as a teacher. He received a Schoolmaster's

⁴⁰Shepperson & Price, p. 159. But see also W. P. Livingstone, Laws of Livingstonia (London, 1923), pp. 194-195, and passim.

⁴¹CS: Overtoun Institute Roll Book, entries Nos. 1 and 2. Also, see Livingstone, op. cit., p. 257.

⁴²CS: Overtoun Institute Diary. Entry for September 28th, 1900.

Certificate, 2nd Class, "A" Division. Ho and Samuel Kauti became the Mission's first Certificated African teachers.

In referring to their joint academic attainments the Overtoun Diary noted that

Considering that their Normal training owing to the defects incidental to the starting of such an undertaking was not what could be regarded as quite adequate, while there was high credit attached to their work during probation, it was thought advisable to withhold from them 1st class certificates in the meantime, placing them in the 1st division of the 2nd.⁴³

By this time Domingo had already acquired considerable teaching experience. On his return from Lovedale in 1895 he had been placed in charge of a vernacular elementary school established for the benefit of African labourers in the Mission's service together with children from the immediately surrounding area. The fact that in October of 1896 he performed rather poorly on an examination regarding the theory and practise of teaching, did not prevent his becoming the Mission's senior African teacher shortly thereafter. Following his certification in 1900 his advancement was rapid. In 1901 he taught Standard 2 of the Normal Course, in 1902 he taught Standard 3, and in the following year he "took over the new Standard 4," taught

⁴³CS: Overtoun Institute Diary. Entry for September 28th, 1900.

the previous year by Henderson himself.⁴⁴

Towards the end of 1903, having received his license to preach from the Presbytery, he was lent to Loudon for a session, to assist in Evangelical and pastoral work. The year 1904 saw him back at Kondowe where among other duties he took charge of the evening school. His superiors commented that he was "an ideal teacher [who] maintained order and discipline, and yet contrived to keep the pupils bright and happy."⁴⁵ He also resumed teaching Standard 4 of the Normal Course. Evidence of his overall status within the Mission, and in particular of the fact that Laws continued to regard him with a paternal eye, was provided by the latter's request that he conduct the thanksgiving service to be held in connection with the celebration of the Laws' silver wedding anniversary.⁴⁶

From the foregoing it would appear that Domingo had every cause to feel proud of his achievements and secure in the expectation of living out a long and distinguished life in the service of the Mission. However,

⁴⁴Ibid. This and subsequent citations are drawn from the annual reports included in the Diary.

⁴⁵Ibid.

⁴⁶Ibid. Also, see Livingstone, op. cit., p. 327.

it was not to be. His return to Loudon in 1907, regarded by the Livingstonia leadership as a major step forward both in his career and in the development of the Mission generally, was in fact to lead in short order to Domingo's resignation and to his severance of all ties with Livingstonia.

To fully appreciate the Mission's view of Charles Domingo at this time and the degree of esteem in which he was held, it might be useful to consider the encomium with which the Institute sped him on his way to Loudon. Writing up the 1906 Annual Report on Education in the Overtoun Diary, Mr. Kirkwood had this to say.

Among those leaving the Institution is Charles Domingo, and his going marks an important step in the development of the missionary policy generally. He is one of three licentiates for the ministry trained here, but for some years he has been employed not as a preacher but as a teacher in the Institution. His work here has been good. He has shown himself a conscientious and able worker and we are sorry to part with him. About a year ago however, he expressed a strong desire to undertake the work for which he has been trained by the Church, and now several spheres have been opened in which he would prove a useful and efficient preacher of the Gospel. Of these it was decided at Council that the most suitable was that offered by Rev. Mr. Fraser whose congregation has looked forward to highly trained native aid being used more extensively than before. This is a matter on which Mr. Fraser himself will no doubt inform the Church at home; meantime I

think it well to call attention to the important step which our Church here is now taking and in preparing for which the Institution has had a considerable share.⁴⁷

In retrospect it seems a particular pity that it should have been largely as a result of friction with Fraser of all people that Domingo left the Mission's service. Fraser was one of what might be termed the second generation of Livingstonia missionaries. He had come out in 1896, imbued with "the minority tradition in the Keswick convention which rejected the desire to dominate, while accepting the need to identify the Church as clearly as possible with its African environment."⁴⁸ He had consistently opposed the negative and somewhat puritanical approach which portrayed Christianity as "a series of prohibitions." He encouraged the composing of Ngoni hymns and attempted to gain approval for a marriage ceremony that would graft certain aspects of local practise onto the traditional Christian base. In particular, Fraser cut through much hierarchical red tape involved in the process of attaining membership in the Church thereby preventing "the build-up of frustration," which existed at that time among many of the lakeshore Tonga, "by baptising converts

⁴⁷CS: Overtoun Institute Diary.

⁴⁸McCracken, unpublished Ph.D. thesis, p. 327.

at four or five times the rate of his colleagues."⁴⁹

This was to no avail, however, when placed against the determination of the senior Livingstonia missionaries to delay, seemingly indefinitely, the actual ordination of African Ministers. Even Fraser shared their view that the African was most efficient as an evangelist when guided and controlled by Europeans.

Given this background, together with Domingo's sincerely held belief that the time for his ordination had arrived, and a clash became inevitable. According to the memories of two reliable contemporaries of Domingo, "the final break took place following a quarrel between Domingo and Fraser at Loudon." In reference to the question of their relationship within the Mission hierarchy, Fraser is reported to have said, "Charles, you are under my rule." To which Domingo is said to have replied, "No, I am under you in your house, but I am not under you in the session."⁵⁰

Passions appear to have been roused, but in defense of Domingo it is perhaps understandable that his pent-up frustrations led him to an expression of views, the wording of which he would regret upon subsequent reflection. It is recorded that a short time later Domingo asked Fraser

⁴⁹ Ibid.

⁵⁰ Ibid., footnote to p. 333.

for his blessing, thereby, it would appear, acknowledging his authority to some extent and seeking to heal the breach. Fraser saw fit to refuse, however, and "the break was sealed."

Domingo thus left the Mission and rapidly proceeded to strike out in a variety of new and positive directions. But before turning to these it should be observed that the Livingstonia authorities did not, regrettably, profit from this sobering and distressing incident. To be sure, some seven years later the first three Nyasa ministers were eventually ordained,⁵¹ but the degree of paternalism maintained by Livingstonia served to make a sham of this nominal equality. As a result, the senior of the three ministers, Yesaya Zerenje Mwase, a Tonga contemporary of Domingo's, soon left the Mission for the second and final time and in the years between the Wars was to prove one of the foremost leaders in the struggle for the fulfillment of African aspirations.⁵²

⁵¹The ceremony took place at Bandawe on May 17th, 1914. The three men ordained were: Yesaya Zerenje Mwase, a Tonga and "a clever, vivacious orator who could read the New Testament in Greek," Hezekiah Tweya, an Ngoni, "a man of soul, humble, serious and patient," and Jonathan Chirwa, a Tumbuka, "a big, active, capable man, and a writer of hymns." These quotations are from Livingstone, op. cit., p. 347.

⁵²For more on Mwase's future career, see Chapter VIII. Among his other activities, Mwase in 1933 founded his own independent church, "The Blackman's Church of God Which is in Tongaland." For further detail, see Zomba: Miss: 12/10.

As for Domingo, initially he set himself up as an independent preacher in the Mzimba District near Loudon. But shortly, perhaps as a result of his correspondence with former fellow students at Lovedale now resident in South Africa, he was introduced, at least indirectly, to Joseph Booth. This at once seems to have opened up a whole new area of thought to Domingo, a sense of shared experience and similar aspirations. One can understandably speculate on the encouragement Domingo must have felt in the realization that his stand on behalf of "a place in the sun" for deserving Africans was shared.

There is a photograph of Domingo taken at about this time, and with its aid and that of a sample of his writing,⁵³ we may see him sitting of an evening in his "study" and there, in the light of a flickering fire engaging in a voluminous correspondence and weighing up the alternatives open to him. We are told that during this transitional period Domingo "is said to have joined the American Negro Baptist Church" and already at this early stage to "have been intimately associated"⁵⁴ with the P.I.M.

⁵³ Shepperson & Price, plates 11 and 12(a) between pp. 158-159.

⁵⁴ Rotberg, Rise of Nationalism, p. 70, citing correspondence between Governor Smith and the Secretary of State in August, 1916.

However this may be, by 1909 Domingo had committed himself to the Seventh Day Baptists. Although he was to retain a lively interest in sister-churches and in other organizations that shared his viewpoint, he was to remain a Seventh Day Baptist first and foremost until his eventual retirement from evangelical work in favor of Government service in the late 1920's.

The Seventh Day Baptists had gained a firm foothold in both northern and southern Nyasaland in the years preceding the First World War,⁵⁵ but their operations were organized on a twofold basis. Broadly speaking, the southern branch was administered by European missionaries sent out and supported by their American and British headquarters, while the northern branch was directed by Domingo.

Lest it be thought that this narrative is straying from the field of education, it should be appreciated that, as in other missions, the establishment of a school system was an urgent priority. In this Domingo was fairly successful, thanks to the provision of funds and literature both by Booth from South Africa and by Seventh Day Baptists from the United States. It has been said that Domingo would have liked to have founded an independent African

⁵⁵ See Shepperson & Price, p. 119 and passim, for a general treatment.

institution on the lines of Overtoun, and doubtless this is so. However, the funds available did not permit the implementation of so ambitious a program. Lacking sufficient financial backing, Domingo would have found it difficult to put together a teaching staff of the requisite quality despite the fact that there was no dearth of capable Livingstonia-trained teachers living in the vicinity who had been dismissed by the Mission for a variety of social sins.⁵⁶

Between 1910 and 1912 Domingo's central station at Chipata near Mzimba provided a forum and a rallying point for African dissatisfactions. Radiating out from Chipata was a network of "pretentious mud churches,"⁵⁷ each with its small school. These served as centers for animated and lengthy discussion of both local and world events in addition to providing a sound grounding in the 3 R's. As Shepperson and Price have pointed out, "most of the teachers could struggle through the local press."⁵⁸ And then, there was a constant stream of Seventh Day Baptist and Watchtower literature sent by Booth. These pamphlets proved acceptable not so much on the grounds of their

⁵⁶CS: Evidence for this statement drawn from an examination of the Overtoun Institute Roll Book.

⁵⁷Shepperson & Price, p. 161, footnote 105, and p. 460.

⁵⁸Ibid., p. 162.

specific theological content, but because they were available, they were cheap, and because for Africans living in the Northern Province of Nyasaland at this time reading material of any sort was in very short supply.

With regard to this reading material, it might be noted that in 1911 Domingo became the Nyasaland contributing editor of the African Sabbath Recorder, a small pamphlet circulated in South and Central Africa with Booth as its editor-in-chief. Throughout this period Domingo was a frequent contributor. His general theme, understandable in the light of his own experience, was what he regarded as the gap between theory and practice in the behaviour of Nyasaland's European community. The best known example of his thinking at this time is to be found in both Shepperson and Price and in Rotberg, and quoted frequently elsewhere. It is included here as much for its language and tone as for its content.

There is too much failure among all Europeans in Nyasaland. The three combined bodies, Missionaries, Government and Companies, or gainers of money, do form the same rule to look upon the native with mockery eyes. It sometimes startles us to see that the three combined bodies are from Europe, and along with them there is a title, "Christendom." And to compare or make a comparison between the MASTER of the title and his servants, it pushes any African away from believing the Master of the title. If we had power enough to communicate ourselves to Europe we

would advise them not to call themselves "Christendom," but "Europeandom." Therefore the life of the three combined bodies is altogether too cheaty, too thefity, too mockery. Instead of "Give," they say "Take away from." From 6 a.m. to 5 or 6 p.m. there is too much breakage of God's pure law as seen in James Epistle, v. 4.⁵⁹

The year 1912 brought a decline in Domingo's fortunes. Two investigators from the Seventh Day Baptists' American headquarters arrived in Nyasaland on a tour of inspection.⁶⁰ As a result of their findings, financial support was withdrawn. Apparently, such personal friction as was involved lay between the investigators and Booth. With the withdrawal of American support, Domingo was deprived not only of the funds essential to the successful prosecution of his work, but more important, of the status conferred by the possession of an overseas connection. Nevertheless, Domingo had served to both stimulate and in part, satisfy, what has been termed "the flush of mistaken nationalism." To quote McCracken, the enthusiasm of Domingo's lieutenants "turned the schools into potent sources of cultural nationalism" and Domingo by emphasizing the "modernizing" aspects of his approach, "made plain his determination to acquire the attributes of European society, even while rejecting European control. His policies not

⁵⁹ Ibid., pp. 163-164.

⁶⁰ Ibid., p. 164.

only paralleled Chilembwe's in the south, they also foreshadowed the major characteristics of independent churches in the 1930's."⁶¹ Domingo remained a force to be reckoned with, but for the time being it was John Chilembwe, still retaining substantial overseas support, who was to make the running. The pendulum of dissent thus swung to the South.

Later Developments at the P.I.M.

The history of John Chilembwe and of the P.I.M. has been too well told by Shepperson and Price, and summarized by Rotberg, to bear a further retelling. And yet a brief examination of the specifically educational implications seems pertinent. There was, for example, an important difference between Chilembwe's approach and that of Elliott Kamwana. Perhaps as a result of his own educational experiences in the United States, Chilembwe set great store by learning. Not for him the dissemination of an apocalyptic message of redemption through supra-human intervention. He was, if you will, too sophisticated, or at least too pragmatic.

⁶¹I am much indebted here as elsewhere to the insights afforded by the recent work of K. J. McCracken. See especially his unpublished doctoral dissertation, "Livingstonia Mission and the Evolution of Malawi, 1875-1939," Cambridge University, 1967. For the above quotations, see pp. 339-340.

It is easy to denigrate the level of the education reached by Chilembwe during his years at Lynchburg. In present-day terms he may perhaps have attained, more or less, the level of two or three "O" level passes. In an American context, a High School Diploma from a less than first-rate Southern state school system, the whole possessing a strong overlay of basic theological training from a fundamentalist Baptist approach. Nevertheless, it is worth noting that even this attainment was probably greater than that of a number of Europeans in the Protectorate. With the exception of ordained missionaries, trained teachers, senior Civil Servants and a few "public school" products engaged in planting or in business, many of the remainder had themselves very likely received no more than a primary education.

Chilembwe's philosophy for at least the first decade and more of his work was that Africans should seek fulfillment and equality of status within an essentially European framework. To this end he "insisted upon European affectations and the wearing of clean, neat, Edwardian attire."⁶² But more than this, Chilembwe had accepted the "Protestant ethic" of progress through

⁶² Rotberg, Rise of Nationalism, p. 64.

education, hard work, moderation, and self-discipline. The following quotations illustrate these points.

His courtesy towards his [countrymen] was . . . great. He wished to see them educated and civilised. . . . He never despised any other Schools or Churches. . . . His aim was to direct his country people to go to any School for education, for that was the elementary to civilization. . . . He exhorted people from keeping themselves into strong drinks, and such like, he taught adults and children to keep on work, not to lounge about. . . . he often said, he liked to see his country men work hard and prosper in their undertakings, also to see them smart, such as Negro fellows he had seen in America and other countries.⁶³

With regard to his own household, it is interesting to note that in the years following the suppression of the Rising, when the Blantyre Mission of the Church of Scotland befriended his two orphaned sons, it was found that the only school subject in which they were deficient was Chinyanja, English having been spoken in their home. Moreover, their only other problem appears to have been a difficulty in digesting nsima and other African food staples, their digestive systems having been attuned to

⁶³Ibid. But see also Zomba: NC4/1/1. This comprises a typed manuscript entitled "A Dialogue of Nyasaland Record of Past Events, Environments and the Present Outlook within the Protectorate." It was written in 1932 by George Simeon Mwase, younger brother of Yesaya Zorenje Mwase. For its wider dissemination we are indebted to Robert I. Rotberg. The manuscript, edited, annotated and introduced by Rotberg is published as Strike a Blow and Die (Cambridge, Mass., 1967). The above quotation appears on p. 27.

a European diet.⁶⁴

In Chilembwe's attempts to create a new society then, and one based on an essentially European model, high priority was given to the establishment both of a system of village schools and a central station school. By 1910, the P.I.M. maintained a dozen schools attended by more than 600 students. Two years later the figure had risen to 906.⁶⁵

The fact that Chilembwe himself had received the bulk of his education either personally, from Booth, or in the United States, does not seem to have prevented him from organizing his Central School along generally British lines. There were some seven standards, and included in the curriculum were Arithmetic, Bible, Geography and History, in addition to practical instruction in Agriculture and that most sought after of subjects, English.

Chilembwe appears to have been well aware of the limitations both of his schools and of their teachers. Shepperson and Price give us the following extract from a report sent to the headquarters of the National Baptist Convention in America in 1912.

⁶⁴Zomba: Article appearing in Drum, October, 1964.

⁶⁵Shepperson & Price, p. 171.

Please note, these teachers are still under instruction three months during each vacation. I am trying to give them the art of teaching the Bible by various helps while engaged in their teaching. My desire is that each teacher should be properly fitted and an expert in Bible teaching as in our other branches. I hope to see in this country and in the confines of our work, some young men to be qualified in the preliminary steps to the ministry of the church in this land; possessing [a] certificate as a teacher or schoolmaster to be a qualified native pastor.⁶⁶

Shepperson and Price focus upon the way in which the social and educational infrastructure created by John Chilembwe and his colleagues at the P.I.M. gradually merged into channels of political activity as the pace of dissent quickened in the months preceding the Rising. This is undeniable, but on the other hand for most of its existence the P.I.M. seems to have sought not only to emulate the established Missions, particularly the Scottish ones, but to co-exist rather than to compete with them. Chilembwe is known to have sent several of his brighter pupils to the Henry Henderson Institute in Blantyre for specialist training. They appear to have been welcomed. Hetherwick himself is quoted as saying that Chilembwe was much "above the ordinary type of mission native." If Hetherwick's tone seems to be patronizing when he added

⁶⁶ Ibid., p. 172.

that Chilembwe's work was "sadly suffering from want of European control and superintendence,"⁶⁷ there was also some truth in this stricture.

Chilembwe like his northern counterpart Domingo suffered from chronic financial anemia. Certainly he was assisted by his American Negro backers, but this support tended to be sporadic and even in the best of times probably amounted to no more than a few hundred dollars a year. This was perhaps a fortune in relation to an average African's cash income at the time, but was little when set beside the more than 2,400 pounds spent on education alone by the Church of Scotland's Blantyre Mission in 1910.⁶⁸

Some conception of this hand-to-mouth existence may be gained from an example cited by Shepperson and Price. They record that Chilembwe had written a letter to the National Baptist Convention in which he found it necessary to appeal specifically for salaries for four of his teachers and for incidental school supplies. This letter was placed before a number of Negro Baptist businessmen with the result that an Alabaman doctor and a Texan

⁶⁷ Ibid., p. 176.

⁶⁸ Report of the Third General Missionary Conference of Nyasaland Held at Mvera, 30th July to 7th August, 1910. Figure taken from the table on p. 87.

minister combined to pledge a total of \$75 a year "on the salary of Brother Chilembwe." Some six others promised \$25 each to be used to pay the wages of the four teachers. Nothing seems to have been done concerning the school supplies.⁶⁹

In January, 1915, with the First World War in its sixth month, John Chilembwe came to feel for a variety of reasons that his back was to the wall. He thereupon set in train the series of events that were in short order to lead to the closing of his schools, the demolition of his church, the deaths not only of himself but of dozens of his followers, and the ringing down of the curtain on Act I of the Providence Industrial Mission. It was not to rise again for more than a decade.

John Chilembwe today ranks high in the pantheon of folk heroes in Malawi. He occupies, however, a position in the hurriedly reconstructed history of Malawi nationalism accorded him by few of his contemporaries.⁷⁰

⁶⁹ Shepperson & Price, pp. 462-463. It should be noted that for the foregoing section much valuable detail may be gleaned from contemporary issues of The Mission Herald to be found at the headquarters of the Foreign Mission Board of the National Baptist Convention, located at 701-703 South 19th Street, Philadelphia, Pennsylvania.

⁷⁰ This is an impression derived both from the opinions expressed by Africans testifying before the Commission of Inquiry into the 1915 Rising, admittedly, perhaps not wholly accurate under the circumstances, and the statements made to me in person by numerous elderly Malawians in the course of a series of interviews conducted in all parts of the country in 1966.

Politically his Rising doubtless served a constructive purpose both contemporaneously and historically in retrospect. Educationally, it was of course a disaster. Yet not an unmitigated one. Chilembwe had demonstrated, to a greater degree than had Domingo, what the African was capable of. In the years following the War his example was not to lack for followers. Among them was the Rev. Dr. Daniel S. Malekebu M.D., D.D., who in 1905 as a 15-year-old school-boy had left the P.I.M. on foot. Twenty years later he was to return from the United States the possessor of an education considerably superior to that attained by his old preceptor; to return, and to re-commence Chilembwe's work.⁷¹

Chilembwe, Kamwana and Domingo are from all available accounts the three Nyasas most instrumental in generating and guiding the growth of African self-awareness in the Protectorate throughout this early period. But they were not alone. There were in addition such men as Peter Nyambo⁷² and Filipo Chinyama,⁷³ associates,

⁷¹ See *infra*, Chapter VIII for a detailed examination of Malekebu's contribution.

⁷² For a general background, see Shepperson & Price, particularly pp. 203-209.

⁷³ *Ibid.*, particularly pp. 291-295.

respectively, of Booth and of Chilembwe. The former was widely travelled abroad; the latter, implicated in the Rising, shared Chilembwe's fate. And both, it may be noted, were from Ncheu which together with Chiradzulu and Mzimba served as an early focal point of African independency in part as a result of its network of industrial missions whose schools served as breeding grounds for self-assertive spirits.

Morrison Malinki and Others

Not all Africans who favoured the general self-assertion of their people chose to follow the more militant leaders. Nor, having once struck out on their own were they all averse to re-affiliating themselves with one or another of the European-run Missions.

Such a one was Morrison Malinki,⁷⁴ an early disciple of Booth at the Z.I.M. and a co-signer in 1897 of the African Christian Union petition together with Booth and Chilembwe.⁷⁵ Between 1902 and 1907 Malinki was in turn employed as a teacher by the Seventh Day Baptists; presided over a string of five schools centered upon his home village of Monekera near Blantyre; and finally, joined the

⁷⁴ Ibid., p. 78 and passim. But also see V. E. Robinson, "History of Nyasaland Union of S.D.A.," unpublished typescript, 1952, pp. 7-8 and 12-13.

⁷⁵ Shepperson & Price, pp. 70-81 and 531-533.

Seventh-day Adventists at Malamulo. He had previously studied English for two years there under Thomas Branch while employed as a teacher and translator.⁷⁶

Malinki retained his friendship with Chilembwe until the close of 1914 when it broke upon the rock of his refusal to have anything to do with the Rising. Precisely how much he knew concerning the details of Chilembwe's plans is uncertain, but in the eyes of Government it was sufficient to cause them to imprison him for a period of time in the wave of semi-hysteria following the Rising's suppression.⁷⁷

Revolutionary Malinki may not have been, but he had no compunction in standing up to Europeans as well as to fellow Africans for what he judged to be his rights. As early as 1902, just after joining Branch at Malamulo as a teacher-evangelist and finding "that the schools were progressing," he was subjected to frequent denunciation by those opposed to Seventh-day Adventist teaching. One day "some of the Europeans came to my schools with a whip and said, 'why are you deceiving our [sic] people and letting them rest on the wrong day?'" Malinki would have none of

⁷⁶ Robinson, op. cit., pp. 7-8.

⁷⁷ Shepperson & Price, pp. 329-330.

this. As he recalled the scene later, "I boldly answered, 'Please, you don't have your people here, these people belong to my tribe and are the people of God.'" ⁷⁸

Malinki then saw himself as his own man, not necessarily tied for life to the Mission that first provided him with an education, and possessing a desire to better the lot both of himself and of his people. A number of other mission-educated Africans shared his attitudes. Some, such as Duncan Njilima ⁷⁹ and John Gray Kufa, ⁸⁰ products of the Blantyre Mission chose to join Chilembwe; others such as the Rev. Harry Kambwiri Matecheta ⁸¹ declined to do so. No clear categorization is possible. Indeed, this variety of motivation and action may be seen as auguring well for the advance that was to follow the War. The desire for improved educational facilities both quantitatively and qualitatively

⁷⁸ Ibid., pp. 457-458.

⁷⁹ Ibid., p. 167 and passim. It might be noted that two of Njilima's sons were taken to the United States to complete their education by Rev. Cheek on his return home. One, Frederick Gresham Njilima, returned to Nyasaland following the conclusion of World War I and participated in a number of activities for a further examination of which see infra, Chapter VIII.

⁸⁰ Ibid., p. 59 and passim, in particular pp. 243-245.

⁸¹ Ibid., pp. 442 and 468. But see also PRO: C.O. 525, No. 66, for Matecheta's oral testimony before the Commission of Inquiry into the 1915 Rising. There is further, an unpublished manuscript biography of Matecheta written by his son and held by the Blantyre Mission of the C.C.A.P.

together with the provision of employment opportunities commensurate with individual educational attainments were central to the thinking of such men as the foregoing.

The Impact of the Rising on
Educational Development

Although, following the outbreak of World War I there was considerable military activity in the extreme northern portion of Nyasaland, the southern part of the country was relatively peaceful. No immediate threat of invasion loomed and for the most part it was business as usual. Events were soon to prove that this was increasingly not the case at Mbombwe, headquarters of the P.I.M. Nor, though to a lesser degree, was this the case at Ncheu, some 80 miles to the northwest. Still, as 1914 drew to a close there was little to disturb the even tenor of life for Africans and Europeans alike despite Chilembwe's percipient, but in the event abortive, letter to the Nyasaland Times.⁸²

The dramatic events that took place on the night of January 23rd, 1915, and for a fortnight thereafter changed all this. The actual Rising spent itself swiftly. This

⁸² Shepperson & Price, pp. 234-239. The letter, as Shepperson and Price point out, was abortive probably solely due to the recent imposition of censorship as a wartime measure. Previously Chilembwe appears to have experienced little difficulty in airing his views through the medium of the Correspondence columns of the Central African Times, or the Nyasaland Times as it had by 1914 become.

indeed seems to have been in line with Chilembwe's intention "to strike a blow and die."⁸³ The repercussions, however, reverberated for some eighteen months. Thereafter, although active discussion receded and died, lasting scars had undoubtedly been formed. For one thing, the Rising had a markedly traumatic effect upon the European community in Nyasaland, in particular upon the non-Governmental, non-missionary segments. How far this reaction, termed hysterical by one observer, was due to the general sense of uncertainty produced by the War, how much to latent feelings of guilt with regard to their past treatment of Africans, and how much to the suddenness of events and the elements of surprise which served to undermine their previously confident assumption that they "knew their Africans," is problematical. What is not in doubt is that these fears and prejudices ran very deep.

Nowhere was this more apparent than in the interest suddenly focussed on "native education," heretofore regarded simply as the means of making available a useful source of cheap semi-skilled labour. Letters were written to the press and meetings were called where the resultant discussions perhaps shed more heat than light upon the

⁸³ This phrase is cited by Mwase as having been used by Chilembwe. For its use in the general context of the Rising, see Mwase, op. cit., pp. 36 and 48-50.

subject. More importantly, native education was discussed at length in both the Legislative and Executive Councils⁸⁴ and thereby became the subject of a considerable correspondence between Governor Smith and the Secretary of State for the Colonies. Additionally, an examination of native education past, present and future, was to play a preeminent role in the deliberations of the Commission of Inquiry soon to be called.

No time was lost by Government in rounding up and bringing to trial all those thought to have been connected with the Rising in any way. This included as "accessories before the fact" those individuals thought to have possessed any prior knowledge, however vague, that they had not seen fit to pass on to the authorities. Ironically, the numerous reports of disaffection reaching Government in the months preceding the Rising dealing with the Chiradzulu area in general and the P.I.M. in particular had been received at the time with a notable degree of equanimity.

From February through April the Executive Council was in frequent session dealing with the sentencing of

⁸⁴The minutes of both of these bodies are to be found in PRO: C.O. 626.

various convicted culprits. Little is recorded of anything said during the course of these sessions regarding the factors that lay behind the Rising. However, on the 30th of March, in dealing with the case of Mr. W. B. Cockerill,⁸⁵ the Council delivered itself of the opinion that "Mr. Cockerill's teachings were calculated to unsettle the native mind and advised that in existing circumstances he should be required to quit the Protectorate."⁸⁶

A fortnight later the Council drew up an Executive Resolution creating a Commission of Inquiry into the causes of the Rising. Under the Chairmanship of Judge R. W. L. Grant it comprised the following: A. M. D. Turnbull, the Assistant Chief Secretary; J. C. Casson, the Superintendent of Native Affairs; the Venerable A. G. B. Glossop, UMCA Archdeacon of Likoma; and representing the planting and business community, R. S. Hynde, later to be replaced by C. Metcalfe the General Manager of the British Central Africa Co.⁸⁷

⁸⁵ Cockerill was a young American Seventh Day Baptist missionary "whose zealous activities amongst the remnants of the Boothian S.D.B. churches to the west of Lake Nyasa before the battle of Karonga had caused the Government to restrict his movements to the neighborhood of Blantyre before the [Chilembwe] Rising had broken out." For this quote see Shepperson & Price, p. 330. For further detail on Cockerill, see ibid., pp. 209-218 and passim.

⁸⁶ PRO: C.O. 626, M.P. 149/15, 30th March, 1915. Executive Resolution 151.

⁸⁷ Ibid., M.P. 101/15, 16th April, 1915. Executive Resolution 156.

Before turning to an examination of their deliberations, note should be taken of a heated discussion which took place during the course of a meeting of the Legislative Council on the 11th of March.⁸⁸ Presiding over the session was the Governor while in attendance were the Chief Secretary, the Treasurer, and the Attorney General in addition to the three unofficial members. These were on the one hand Dr. Laws, and on the other, A. L. Bruce, owner of the Magomero Estates, seconded and supported by his fellow planter, James Fiddes.

The proceedings were opened by Laws with a motion requesting the appointment of a Commission to investigate the circumstances surrounding the Rising. This he subsequently withdrew in deference to Government's protestation that the matter was still sub judice as a number of those accused of complicity were still on trial.

Bruce then enlivened the proceedings with a motion proposing "that pending the finding of the Commission about to be appointed by the Government, all schools in charge of native teachers in the Protectorate be closed at once."⁸⁹ Fiddes seconded the motion following which the Governor in his capacity as Chairman enquired as to whether Bruce made

⁸⁸PRO: C.O. 626. Minutes of the Nyasaland Legislative Council meeting for Thursday, 11th March, 1915.

⁸⁹Ibid.

any distinction between the various missions operating in the country. "No," was the reply. At this Laws rose to express his "deepest disappointment and surprise"⁹⁰ at the motion and to make the useful point that while Bruce in the course of his remarks had inveighed against the effects of higher education, his motion, if implemented, would in fact affect primary education almost exclusively and leave higher education alone as most of the instruction in the latter was in fact given by European missionaries. Laws also took this opportunity to remark that the missions' grant-in-aid worked out to about 2d per student per annum while the equivalent amount in South Africa's Cape Province was 15 shillings.

He went on to make the point that over the years he had received more requests for higher-educated natives than he had been able to fill. Some years back, in fact, an application had been received from Bruce's own estates and a lad was sent. After serving his term, however, he came home and refused to return, such were the conditions of work that he had experienced.

Laws further pointed out that in the course of his Mission's religious teaching, loyalty to the Government was

⁹⁰ Ibid.

included in the catechism and that if the Missions firmly established in Nyasaland did not offer educational facilities, such was now the self-evident desire for it on the part of the people that increasing numbers would go to America or elsewhere in search of it only to perhaps return with disastrous results similar to that evidenced by Chilembwe.

Continuing relentlessly, he stressed that it was largely due to the loyalty of the vast majority of educated natives that the recent Rising had been so rapidly suppressed.

In conclusion, Laws put the point that any educational system was bound to produce individuals who did not live up to the general level of expectations. One had to look no further than the United Kingdom itself. He would be pleased to profit from the example of such schools as might exist upon Bruce's estates; but failing that, since it seemed to be generally accepted that educated natives were deemed necessary to the development of the country from a European viewpoint, let alone their own, this seemed to prove the need for "a greater and better education rather than for any attempt to set back the hands of the clock."⁹¹

⁹¹Ibid.

This rebuttal brought about something of a climb-down on the part of Bruce. He stressed that he merely wanted to see a centralization of education under strict European control. Even this, however, Laws could not accept. In his view, a policy of selective élitism would lead to the very qualities of "swollen headism" that Bruce was presumably objecting to. Better by far to lessen the gulf between the more highly educated and their fellows by providing as broad a base of primary education as possible.

The Chief Secretary attempted to pour oil upon troubled waters by stressing the Council's utmost confidence in Dr. Laws personally. He went on to say that while condemning the Rising as "a piece of treachery of the blackest kind, he was not prepared to support so drastic a motion as Mr. Bruce's without very clear proof, which as far as he knew they had not got, that the course which he advocated was immediately necessary to the public safety."⁹² The Attorney General agreed that the motion was premature as the matter was still sub judice. As such, he recommended that the Council neither pass nor reject Bruce's motion. Instead, he hoped they would agree to an amendment that he would like to propose stating that "pending the finding

⁹² Ibid.

of the Commission to be appointed, the Council did not consider it expedient to resort to any general suppression of native schools."⁹³ To this amendment, however, the Governor raised the objection that the wording seemed to imply that Government did in fact "intend" to close down the schools.

After a lengthy period of hair-splitting and attempts at rephrasing, it became clear that Government took the view that Bruce's motion in addition to being intemperately worded was in a measure forcing Government's hand. As a result, the amendment as proposed by the Attorney General and subsequently agreed to stated that "this Council considered the question as to how far the Rising had been brought about by the influence of native schools should fall within the scope of the Commission to be appointed."⁹⁴ Bruce's original motion was withdrawn.

The Commission of Inquiry and Its Aftermath

To what degree the urgency expressed by certain Legislative Council members influenced Government is uncertain. The fact remains that they moved with considerable speed both in appointing the Commission and in drawing up its terms of reference. These latter were fourfold and

⁹³ Ibid.

⁹⁴ Ibid.

read as follows:

- (1) The Origin, causes and objects of the said Rising; whether it was general or confined to particular classes of natives, and to what extent it may be attributed to false ideas acquired and disseminated by emigrant natives who have returned to the Protectorate, to correspondence between persons resident in other countries and local natives, or to literature circulated among the more educated natives.
- (2) Any alleged grievances of the natives which may have conduced to the Rising, whether against Europeans generally or against particular classes of the community.
- (3) The adequacy or otherwise of the present means available for obtaining information as to the state of native feeling.
- (4) The effects of Mission teaching; religious, educational or industrial, on the native mind and character.⁹⁵

The Commission sat throughout July and August, 1915. Written statements were solicited and received from individuals representing all sections of the community, African as well as European. These voluntary statements reflected the views of their authors on various aspects of the Rising. In addition, more than fifty witnesses were called, again drawn from all sections of the community. A great deal of the testimony delivered orally by these witnesses has recently become

⁹⁵ PRO: C.O. 626, M.P. 101/15, 16th April, 1915. Executive Resolution 156.

available for examination.⁹⁶

As the hearings progressed it became apparent, substantiated in numerous instances by the line and tone of the questioning, that the Commission was predisposed to look with favour upon the work of the UMCA and the two Roman Catholic missions. The remainder were viewed somewhat askance, ranging from guarded reservations vis-à-vis the "liberalmindedness" of the Scottish Missions, to downright hostility with regard to some of the smaller and industrial missions.

One point that tends to lend countenance to this view is the selection by Government of Archdeacon Glossop as the representative of the Missions on the Commission. In terms of length of service in the country he might be said to have been adequately qualified. While both Laws and Hetherwick had preceded him by more than a decade, he had been in the country since 1893. Nevertheless, he had been far less intimately involved than either of the aforementioned with education specifically, or, in mission

⁹⁶ PRO: C.O. 525, No. 66. There is a total of over 400 pages of closely printed typescript embodying, among much else, the views and opinions of representatives of virtually every mission operating in Nyasaland at that time. Much may be gleaned from this invaluable source material regarding the structure and the operating philosophy of the various missions. This is particularly useful in the case of some of the smaller missions where such information has so far proved unobtainable to the writer.

work generally on a Protectorate-wide basis. In the light of this, Glossop's Anglican background seems to have given credence in the minds of the Scottish Presbyterians in particular to the suggestion of an "establishment" bias on the part of Government.

By the end of the year the Commission had produced its Report. This in turn gave rise to what may be termed "Round 2" in the controversy over native education. The first development was a consideration of the Report by the Executive Council, at its meeting of the 18th of February, 1916.⁹⁷ The Report included two sections which embodied its recommendations. These were entitled Missions and Education and Administrative. Under the former heading there were some ten recommendations. These ten, together with the views expressed by the Executive Council with regard to them, are as follows:

- (1) That religious sects which teach doctrines politically objectionable and likely to lead to disaffection or unrest be excluded from the Protectorate and that only properly accredited Missions be allowed, i.e., those supported by responsible bodies at home which make adequate provision for the maintenance of their missionaries. ExC: That while the events of January, 1915 and incidents previous thereto pointed to the necessity of some control in the establishment and

⁹⁷ PRO: C.O. 626. Minutes of the Nyasaland Executive Council meeting for Friday, 18th February, 1916.

operation of Missions in Nyasaland, it would be desirable in the first place to ascertain the views of His Majesty's Government on the subject and obtain if possible for its guidance, legislation which might have been enacted in other parts of His Majesty's Dominions to meet a similar condition of affairs.

- (2) That power be taken to limit the number of native churches and schools including Mohammedan mosques and schools and to suppress independent native churches disseminating unsettling or seditious doctrine. Ex.C: That the existing procedure in respect of the establishment of native churches and schools be explained to the Secretary of State and that further action to suppress existing missions, churches or schools preaching or teaching unsettling or seditious doctrines would require legislative authority.
- (3) That the spheres of influence and operation of the different Missions be delimited by Government. Ex.C: That the attitude of Government in the past towards a delimitation of spheres of influence and operations of the several Missions be stated to the Secretary of State, and the desirability of taking legislative power to prevent rivalry and competition which was calculated to lead to strife and a disturbance of the peace.
- (4) That all inflammable religious literature and any literature inculcating Ethiopianism or dangerous political doctrine be excluded. Ex.C: That all practical steps be taken to exclude pernicious literature inculcating dangerous political doctrine.
- (5) That an Advisory Board consisting of Government members and representatives of the principal Missions be appointed to advise Government on Mission questions. Ex.C: That Council was not in favor of the establishment of an Advisory Board on Mission questions.

- (6) That industrial teaching be encouraged including instruction in improved agricultural method.
 - (7) That there should be closer European supervision in the matter of education and non-establishment of schools which cannot be properly supervised.
 - (8) That education on European lines be provided for Mohammedans.
 - (9) That the grant-in-aid of education be given only where the Government is satisfied as to the standard and character of the teaching.
 - (10) That there be Government control and supervision of schools under a Director of Education.
- Ex.C: With proposals (6) to (10) the Council was in full sympathy but it was certain that in view of other demands, local revenues would be insufficient to meet the additional expenditure involved and that effect could be given to recommendations for an extended policy only if His Majesty's Treasury were willing to come to the aid of the local Government.⁹⁸

A fortnight later Governor Smith addressed a Confidential Dispatch to the Secretary of State in which he dwelt at length on the problem of native education in the Protectorate.⁹⁹

On the whole Smith expressed himself as being in favour of an increase in educational facilities (subject to suitable controls), and of greater Government

⁹⁸Ibid. The quotations are included here verbatim. The recommendations of the Commission of Inquiry, and the views expressed by the Executive Council as cited in the minutes of the latter's meeting are merely juxtaposed for the sake of clarity.

⁹⁹EH: File entitled "Nyasaland Rising in 1915." Governor Smith to Secretary of State, 6th March, 1916.

participation in education. Nevertheless, now as for the generation to come, the recurring theme was the lack of and need for money. "If money could be made available for the purpose, I think a few apprenticeships or studentships at Government experimental farms might usefully be established." Again, in summing up:

Looking . . . to the position in which education stands today in Nyasaland, its denominational character and the many questions arising out of it, it is a matter for serious consideration if the time has not come when more direct intervention and control should be undertaken by Government. It involves a material increase in expenditure which it is unlikely the local revenues for some little time to come would be able to bear . . . looking to the heavy contribution to general revenue already levied in direct taxation of the native, I am unable to suggest special taxation for educational purposes. I refrain therefore from any more detailed consideration of the question until your views have been expressed and it is ascertained if the Treasury will be prepared to come to our help by a grant-in-aid which is in my opinion essential.¹⁰⁰

Meanwhile, a number of missions took issue with Government on the question of the Commission's findings. In the vanguard as might be suspected were the Scottish Missions, and in particular, the redoubtable Dr. Hetherwick.

The January-July, 1916 issue of Life and Work in British Central Africa was devoted almost entirely to a

¹⁰⁰ Ibid.

consideration of the Commission's Report.¹⁰¹ "For the information of our readers," the Report was included, published in full. In addition there was a lengthy editorial in which Hetherwick delivered himself of a number of opinions. Regret was expressed to begin with over the use of the term "Native Rising," which was seen as unfairly stigmatizing the African population as a whole, "the vast majority of whom are and always have been absolutely loyal."¹⁰² Continuing, the editorial remarked that "We would now fain have looked for some expression of regret for things thoughtlessly said at a time of tension." On the issues of land, labour certificates, forestation and native police; those recommendations grouped under the heading of Administrative, the Mission found itself in substantial agreement with the Report. Not so on the question of education. Frostily, the editorial observed that

The Commission had a great opportunity, an opportunity of initiating or at least suggesting such measures dealing with native education as would have left a mark on the education of Central Africa such as was left by Macaulay's famous Minute of 1835 on the Education of India. The Commission omits this opportunity.¹⁰³

¹⁰¹EH: Copy of L & W in BCA for January-July, 1916 included in file on "Nyasaland Rising in 1915."

¹⁰²Ibid. It might be added that this complaint was echoed frequently and volubly by the majority of the Africans testifying before the Commission.

¹⁰³Ibid.

In the opinion of L & W in BCA , one of the sorest points was the failure of the Commission to do justice to the Blantyre Mission's forty years of educational endeavour. Moreover, this was substantially exacerbated in the Mission's eyes by the recommendation of the Commission that Government should examine the "credentials" of missionary agencies. For their own reasons, and in the light of their interpretation of the Commission's investigations in general, they chose to see "credentials" as becoming confused with "creed," and as providing evidence of bias on the part of the commissioners in favour of the Anglican and Roman Catholic Missions. This interpretation appears to have been lacking in accuracy although in the light of the composition of the Commission and its handling of certain witnesses it can be seen that a misunderstanding could have arisen. Further substantiation of the Blantyre Mission's suspicions was provided by the Report's submission that

. . . in the methods of evangelisation used by the non-Roman and non-Anglican missions . . . there is a danger that the teaching may be made a vehicle for undesirable political propaganda and that this danger does not exist in the methods of the Romanists and Anglican Missions.¹⁰⁴

¹⁰⁴ ibid.

The editorial concluded by giving its general approval to the appointment of a "qualified" Director of Education and to the formation of an Advisory Board for education. It observed, however, that the latter had already existed for a number of years among the Federated Missions. Finally, reference was again made to the inadequacy of Government's grant-in-aid of education and objections were raised regarding the Commission's overlooking of "certificated native teachers" and "qualified native inspectors" when dealing with the question of supervision. It was a formidable array of reservations.

And this was not all. Not content with making known their views throughout the Protectorate, the Scottish Missions sought redress at the Colonial Office itself. Between March and August of 1916 a lengthy correspondence took place between the Rev. Dr. J. N. Ogilvie, Convener of the Church of Scotland Foreign Missions Committee, and Arthur Steel-Maitland, Under-Secretary for the Colonies.¹⁰⁵ The concern of the Home Mission was increased by the Nyasaland Government's decision, dictated by wartime security, to suspend all discussion or any other active consideration of the Report in the Legislative

¹⁰⁵ EH: Copies of this correspondence also to be found in the file "Nyasaland Rising in 1915."

Council pending the cessation of hostilities.

The Colonial Office attempted to allay the Church of Scotland's fears in a letter of the 11th of April from Steel-Maitland to Ogilvie in which it was noted that "so far as strictures are made upon religious teachings and teachers it is chiefly upon the smaller and less responsible Missions and the Church of Scotland is very little implicated except in so far as a few of its adherents were in the ranks of the rebels."¹⁰⁶ This to a large degree mollified the C. of S. Foreign Missions Committee as did a subsequent letter in August in which it was stated that Governor Smith had expressed himself in dispatches as being "absolutely satisfied with the work and teaching of the Scottish Missions."¹⁰⁷

And yet, for the Foreign Missions Committee there was still the caveat that Smith regarded the Scottish Missions only as "among the older Missions as to which no question arises except in regard to any arrangements which may be possible for defining the spheres of work of the various Missions."¹⁰⁸ To the Church of Scotland, established in situ for over forty years, any "defining of

106 Ibid. Steel-Maitland to Ogilvie, 11th April, 1916.

107 Ibid. Steel-Maitland to Ogilvie, 4th August, 1916.

108 Ibid.

spheres of work" at this late stage, at least in so far as the Shire Highlands was concerned, was quite out of the question. This point was made among others in the Memorandum submitted by the Scottish Churches to the Colonial Office.¹⁰⁹

The Memorandum reiterated most of the points raised by the L & W editorial discussed above; notably, that of the "utterly meager and inadequate" grant provided by Government for education, and the Missions' welcome of the appointment of a Director of Education provided that he "be a man fully qualified and equipped by educational training . . . impartial in his attitude to all churches and Missions . . . [and] that his oversight should be strictly limited to secular education."¹¹⁰

Finally, the Memorandum foreshadowed a bitter struggle that was to erupt over a decade later during the early years of the Education Department's existence. This concerned the abrasive relationship that had developed between the Presbyterian and the Roman Catholic missions.

¹⁰⁹EH: "Nyasaland Rising in 1915." Full text of the Memorandum is included. Memorandum entitled "Statement on Behalf of the Church of Scotland and the United Free Church of Scotland in Reference to Report of Commission Appointed by H.E. the Governor to Inquire into Various Matters and Questions Concerned with the Native Rising within the Nyasaland Protectorate."

¹¹⁰Ibid.

The crux of the matter lay in the refusal of the Roman Catholic and Anglican missions to recognize the heretofore generally accepted principle of "spheres of influence" for both evangelical and educational work. It should be pointed out that in the case of the UMCA sincere attempts were made to cooperate, only insisting on reserving the ultimate right to evangelize "if any call should come."¹¹¹ The Catholics, on the other hand, saw the internal allocation of potential mission fields among their several orders as the only division they need recognize. As regards their work vis-à-vis that of any and all Protestants, they did not see the question of a modus vivendi as arising.

It is with this in mind, together with the observations made above regarding the composition of the Commission and the attitudes it displayed in the examination of witnesses, that the concluding passage of the Memorandum should be read. Expressing their concurrence in the proposal to establish an educational Advisory Board; "provided the different missionary interests are proportionately represented upon it," the Memorandum concluded by noting that

¹¹¹ Report of the Third General Missionary Conference of Nyasaland Held at Mvera 30th July to 7th August, 1910. Quote from the letter sent by J. E. Hine, Anglican Bishop of Northern Rhodesia, to the President of the Missionary Conference, p. 6.

The Scottish Churches observe with sincere regret a note running through the Report and even more markedly displayed in the course of the evidence before the Commission which suggests a distinct lack of impartiality in the consideration given to the different Christian Missions in the Protectorate. There are references in the Report and particularly in the examination of witnesses by members of the Commission which show a decided favor for Anglican and Roman Catholic Missions and methods which the Scottish Churches consider to be not only without adequate reason but entirely opposed to the spirit and traditions of the British Empire and which unless guarded against cannot but be harmful to the Scottish Missions. The Scottish Churches therefore urge that the spirit of impartiality in the action of Government towards the various Christian Missions established in the Protectorate should be strictly maintained.¹¹²

While this manifestation of open suspicion and distrust did not augur particularly well for post-war relations between Government and the several Missions, it seems apparent that there were grounds on which those Missions longest established in the country had reason to see themselves as ill-used.

Livingstonia for its part, while fully associating itself with the views and appreciating the vested interests of its sister mission to the South, did not possess the same degree of personal involvement. Prior to the War the Catholic Missions had not established themselves in

¹¹² EH: File on "Nyasaland Rising in 1915."

the field generally accepted as Livingstonia's.¹¹³ The latter's leadership therefore, left it to Blantyre and to Hetherwick to make the running.

Further Effects of Wartime
Conditions on Education

The remainder of the War years from mid-1916 to 1919 were marked by a suspension, or at least a very marked reduction, in educational activity throughout the country. Yet these years were not devoid of significance for the future. The de-populating at all levels of the Missions' staffs and students has been referred to, but for those left behind there was greatly increased activity. In the case of those Africans who perforce, and temporarily, filled the places of absent Europeans, there was a marked advance in their assumption of responsibility.

Medical facilities were stretched to the utmost. This was particularly the case at Livingstonia, the front-line station so to speak; and at Blantyre, the logistical hub for the East African campaign's southern front. The hospitals of both Scottish Missions together with their staffs were taken over by the military. On the industrial

¹¹³ The Roman Catholic missions operating in Nyasaland did not establish fields of work in the Kasungu and Mzimba Districts of the Northern Province until after the conclusion of World War I.

and agricultural sides, all Missions were kept busy filling orders of food and equipment for the troops. At Livingstonia, the "meal mill" was kept running round the clock and the Overtoun post office and telegraph station served as the nerve center for military communications.¹¹⁴

In the midst of all this upheaval, paradoxically enough, a second trio of Divinity students completed their Theological Course at the Blantyre Mission and were ordained in 1916.¹¹⁵ The services they were now able to contribute filled important gaps left by those European missionaries on secondment to wartime duty.

Far humbler, but perhaps of greater importance in the long run, were those Africans drawn from the opposite end of the social scale who collectively comprised that army of porters and carriers of whom General Northey was subsequently to say, "the tenga-tenga won the War."¹¹⁶ Demands were made repeatedly upon all the Missions and in particular upon those operating closest to the battle zone and to its lines of supply for carriers and more carriers. Missionaries were requested as well to take over supervision of the latter from white officers inexperienced

¹¹⁴Forty Years in Darkest Africa, p. 16.

¹¹⁵Alexander Hotherwick, The Romance of Blantyre (London, 1930), p. 218.

¹¹⁶Ibid., p. 221.

"in handling natives."

"'Send up more missionaries,'" the call went out, "and more missionaries went. This was their job, and the transport carriers recognized that the new officers were their friends. And the war went on." But it took an awful toll. "The loss of life . . . in the native transport was appalling." They fell by the tens of thousands of incessant overwork, inadequate food, and rampant disease. "Those of them who survived; battered, broken and maimed for life many of them, crept home to their villages, unpensioned, unmedalled, undecorated, uncheered, the heroes of the War, the saviours of the Empire in Africa. 'Tabwera!' 'We have come back!'"¹¹⁷

Unrecognized, perhaps, but not unchanged. Having laid down their lives in their thousands in the white man's cause it was unlikely that those who survived would return to a passive acceptance of the status quo ante bellum. And what of that more highly educated element concentrated in useful employment throughout the War years in the Blantyre/Zomba area? What were their thoughts concerning what they had seen? What were their aspirations for the future? Towards the close of his The Romance of Blantyre the

¹¹⁷ Ibid.

percipient Hetherwick touches on this aspect.

It was a strange experience the country passed through, the presence for months and years of a varied crowd of the allied forces, British, South African, Dutch, and native and coloured troops from the Union of South Africa and Rhodesia- "all sorts and conditions of men." To the onlooker who saw behind the scenes, the native population, who also saw behind the scenes, seemed but little affected by the new element sojourning so long in their midst- certainly not to the extent one would have expected or feared. Amid the whirlpool the native kept his head- and when all was past he went back to his job- seemingly unmoved. But then the African rarely reveals his mind. All that the War years taught him and revealed to him will come out some day.¹¹⁸

¹¹⁸ Ibid., p. 220. Italics mine.

CHAPTER V

GOVERNMENT TAKES A HAND: THE "SPORTING CHANCE"¹

The fundamental business of Government in Africa is education.²

Some Blueprints for Educational Progress

The Armistice brought to Nyasaland as to much of the rest of the world, an exhaustion that was soon to be compounded by economic depression. One of the by-products of this depression that directly affected Nyasaland was the drying up of the Home financial support upon which so many missions were dependent for survival. This situation led to retrenchment and in some cases virtual stagnation. But the end of the War also brought about a renewed interest in several quarters with regard to the future prospects of those African subjects of the Crown who had themselves played a considerable role in the prosecution of the Imperial war effort.

¹Journal of the African Society, Vol. XX, No. 78 (January, 1921). From "Native Education in Central Africa," by Africanus, p. 100. The author cites "two sayings of the Prince of Wales in 1919," as "The world looks to Britain for a lead," and "Let every baby born have a sporting chance."

²Julian Huxley, Africa View (London, 1931), p. 300, quoting J. H. Oldham.

"Reconstruction in Central Africa," was the title and the theme of an interesting article written anonymously under the pseudonym "Africanus" by Frank Melland, a young administrative officer in Northern Rhodesia,³ and published at a time when the ink was scarcely dry on the Treaty of Versailles. The writer's primary goal was the reform of the African Civil Service and the allocation of sufficient funds to ensure a revitalization of British Africa. "But for the War," he wrote, "we might have drifted on in the old way till the difficulties became insuperable; but this war has opened our eyes."⁴ It had also, he believed, caused Africa to emerge from the melting pot "and the moulding should be done before it cools."⁵

After dealing with such issues as Government pay scales, the need for improved communications and better medical services, Melland turned to "native education." Indeed, fully half of his arguments were adduced in support of its preeminence. A host of authorities ranging from John Buchan to Booker T. Washington were invoked by

³ Journal of the African Society, Vol. XIX, No. 74 (January, 1920), pp. 92-100. Melland wrote numerous articles on social questions throughout the inter-War period. Together with T. Cullen Young of the Livingstonia Mission he authored African Dilemma (London, 1937).

⁴ Melland, "Reconstruction," p. 95.

⁵ Ibid., p. 93.

quotation. Without building up a satisfactory system of native education Melland argued, "we cannot justify our dependencies" and "nothing else avails." The writer was clear upon one point: "the main work of education must be the duty of the State." The missionary contribution was fully recognized, however, and the hope was expressed that their knowledge and experience would be made available through the medium of a "Missionary Board of Advice."⁶

When it came to examining the content and the specific aims of education, Melland indicated his acceptance of the increasingly prevalent view that industrial teaching should predominate. He felt that "we must first get to know the natives, and we must also define what we mean by education for them; for whether it is to have a good or evil influence depends on the choice we make." In defining his own concept of native education, Melland envisioned it as "the drawing out and developing [of] the existing faculties; at teaching industries and not at creating an army of book-learners." In support of this point of view he cited Tuskegee Institute in the southern United States as a practical example, together with

⁶Ibid., p. 99.

as well the views of a number of writers on education.⁷

Whether this thinking was in tune with current African opinion, or at least with that of its educated elite, is a moot point. That it represented a point of view that came to colour much of the educational thinking of the policy planners in the years between the Wars is less open to question. Moreover, judged by pre-World War I standards, it was a reasonably appropriate and comparatively enlightened approach. However, as events were to demonstrate, there was a mood of rising expectations among many Africans with which for the most part, colonial educational philosophy failed to keep pace.

The early 1920's then was a questing time, a time for the reexamination of aims and the reevaluation of feasible goals. "In the realm of African education the Europeans had in these years a unique opportunity to influence profoundly the future thought and outlook" of the members of those societies for whose destinies they were at the time responsible. For a generation to come, African minds were to be at their most receptive to the teaching of Western Europe. In the aftermath of the War,

⁷ Ibid., p. 98. These writers included C. T. Loram and A. Colquhoun among others, in addition to an excerpt from the 1908 Report of the Cape Select Committee on Native Education.

suspicion of schools and of missionaries was being replaced throughout Africa by interest and enthusiasm; by curiosity and a desire to learn.⁸

In Nyasaland alone in the years immediately following the War it was estimated that there were approximately 240,000 children of school age.⁹ Of this number, making due allowance for the meagre nature of much of the schooling offered, particularly at the sub-primary level, some 146,800 students were listed as being enrolled at one of the 2,748 schools conducted by the various missions.¹⁰ This testifies impressively to the work heretofore sustained almost entirely by missionary endeavour in the absence of a Government Department of Education such as was already commonplace in Britain's West African Territories.

Here then was a firm foundation upon which to build. Government must at the very least continue to encourage and support this voluntary educational effort. But this was not in itself enough. There was a growing belief among thoughtful men in Britain and in Africa that

⁸ Gray, Two Nations, p. 128.

⁹ Almost certainly an underestimate.

¹⁰ T. Jesse Jones, Education in East Africa (London, 1925), p. 199, citing "the latest official estimate."

an overall policy should be formulated to which these voluntary efforts on the part of the missions could conform in the interests of coherence and efficiency.

The opening years of the post-War decade saw a number of pressures, official and semi-official, from both within and without the Protectorate directed towards these ends. In mid-August, 1920, an Educational Conference was convened in Blantyre at which an improved Scheme of Education, involving greater Government participation was discussed. The following December the Executive Council considered a report on the Conference's proceedings. The Council concluded that "it would be desirable to obtain expert advice at this stage on the whole question of native education."¹¹

Fifteen months later at a meeting of the Legislative Council, Dr. Hetherwick, recently reappointed to the Council after an absence of several years, proceeded to address himself to the subject of Government support for African education. In the course of the debate upon the Appropriations Bill, Hetherwick expressed bitter disappointment that the £5,000 allocated to African education in the Estimates had been pruned back by Government to

¹¹PRO: C.O. 626. Minutes of a meeting of the Executive Council, 28th and 29th December, 1920. M.P. 1494/19. Education.

"the usual £2000." Hetherwick felt that the Governor would agree with him "that this was a truly unworthy contribution to what had been done by missions for the education of the natives." But becoming more pragmatic, Hetherwick, according to the Minutes, assaulted Government with the following statistical barrage.

He [Hetherwick] saw that the number of native subordinate staff employed by the Government in the various departments totaled 242 native clerks and typists. He had summed up the amount paid to them by the Government: it amounted to £9,995. . . . Had the Government considered what would be the total if they had none of these native clerks and were obliged to employ Europeans? He had tried to form an estimate of it, and had reckoned very economically, that if all those native clerks were replaced by European clerks, it would amount to from £20,000 to £25,000 per annum. . . . He felt sure that was a strong argument whereby [the missions] could come forward and ask now and in the future for some remuneration [for] . . . the work of educating these natives.¹²

Hetherwick added that

Another point was the justice to the natives themselves. The Government was asking for and expecting to get from natives in the way of hut tax, £111,047. . . . Now, he thought that if the Government looked into the matter, they would find that no less than half the import dues paid at Customs were paid indirectly by the native. The Government asked therefore for another £30,000 to be paid by them. That is to say, that natives contributed £140,000 and he thought out of that sum something more should be done directly for the native.¹³

¹²PRO: C.O. 626. Minutes of the 25th Session of the Legislative Council, 10th April, 1922.

¹³Ibid.

In his reply to this together with much else, the Chief Secretary attempted to pour oil upon troubled waters in time-honoured tradition: "Congratulate the Honourable and Reverend Member . . . sure they had listened with the greatest interest . . . sympathised . . . no one regretted more." But,

. . . in view of the state of affairs . . . it was felt . . . they should not embark on new schemes . . . they must defer to another year the question of getting expert advice to advise them as to the lines which education should follow. If they made an initial mistake in their system, they might do incalculable harm. They wanted to make sure that they educated the natives on right lines, and they had as an initial measure to get expert advice.¹⁴

Expert advice in "another year"; presumably the harm produced by a policy of inertia was "calculable."

A year later at a subsequent meeting of the Legislative Council, Hetherwick returned to the attack by tabling a question inquiring

Whether any or what steps have been taken to carry into effect the improved Scheme of Education discussed at the Educational Conference three years ago, and when we may expect a practical outcome thereof?¹⁵

The Acting Chief Secretary replied that "The position is unchanged" although the appointment of the distinguished

¹⁴ ibid.

¹⁵ PRO: C.O. 626. Minutes of the 27th Session of the Legislative Council, 16th and 17th April, 1923.

South African educator C. T. Loram "to investigate the matter" was under consideration. However, "nothing further has been heard on the subject."¹⁶ The ball remained in Government's court, so to speak, but other factors were by now at work.

The months of June to August, 1923, saw the visit to Nyasaland of the Rev. Frank Ashcroft, Secretary to the Foreign Mission Committee of the United Free Church of Scotland. This represented the first thorough inspection of that Church's mission fields in East and Central Africa ever undertaken by an official of the Home Committee. It resulted in the preparation of a Report that was sufficiently highly regarded to warrant the inclusion of lengthy extracts in the subsequently published Report of the Phelps-Stokes Commission, Education in East Africa.¹⁷ It is to

¹⁶ Ibid.

¹⁷ For the Ashcroft Report, see Shepperson Collection: United Free Church of Scotland, Foreign Mission Committee, Report on our Central African Fields. No date, but presumably 1923 or 1924, 32 pp. For the citation of the Ashcroft Report in that of the Phelps-Stokes Commission, see Jones, Education in East Africa, pp. 206-207. For the critical impact of these two Commissions upon the Livingstonia Mission field, see Shepperson Collection for a letter from Elmslie to Ashcroft sent from Ekwendeni, April 29th, 1924. Elmslie notes that "The Education Commission [Phelps-Stokes] is at Kondowe but none but the residents of that enlightened region have an opportunity of meeting them. They are not coming this way. Well, if you have rubbed the starch out of us they would rub holes in our garments. . . . But I consider your report an able document and it will get us out of a rut just at the time when we should be striking out on new lines."

the origins and significance of that Commission that attention will now be directed.

The Phelps-Stokes Commission and Its Report

In 1917, the Phelps-Stokes Fund, a charitable foundation based in the United States, whose Trustees believed profoundly "in the power of education as a factor in civilization,"¹⁸ brought forth a lengthy Report on the current state of Negro Education in the United States. In the light of the favourable response to this Report, and at the suggestion of the Foreign Missions Conference of North America, the Trustees took the decision to appoint a Commission to survey the educational needs of West and South Africa. That this fell within the scope of the Fund's responsibilities may be seen from the will of Miss Caroline Phelps Stokes, the founder of the Fund, in which its purposes are cited as including "The education of Negroes both in Africa and the United States."¹⁹ This first African Commission visited those portions of the continent to which its brief was directed in 1920/21. Its Report, published the following year, was "well received in both official and

¹⁸Jones, Education in East Africa, p. xv.

¹⁹Ibid., p. xx. For a detailed examination of the early work of the Fund, founded in New York in 1911, see J. H. Dillard, Twenty Year Report of the Phelps-Stokes Fund, 1911-1931 (New York, 1932).

missionary circles."²⁰

During the spring and summer of 1923, a series of conferences were held in England between the President of the Fund, Anson Phelps Stokes; Dr. Thomas Jesse Jones, the Fund's Educational Director and a noted authority on American Negro education who had led the first African Commission; and such influential British figures as J. H. Oldham, Sir Frederick (later Lord) Lugard, and William G. A. Ormsby-Gore, Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State for the Colonies.²¹ The latter in June also chaired an important conference of representatives of Church and State, convened to consider a Memorandum submitted by Oldham at Ormsby-Gore's request suggesting possible avenues of cooperation between the missions and Government with regard to African education. As a result of this pivotal "Derby Day Meeting," Ormsby-Gore had appointed a permanent Advisory Committee on Native Education in Tropical Africa who subsequently "met monthly to consider the education reports it received from the Colonies and to discuss policy with Governors, Directors of Education,

²⁰ Gray, Two Nations, p. 131. For this report, see T. Jesse Jones, Education in Africa: A Study of West, South, and Central Africa. Report of the First Educational Commission (New York, 1922).

²¹ Jones, Education in East Africa, p. xix.

and other authorities in the field of Education."²²

Meanwhile, the upshot of the series of conferences with the Phelps-Stokes representatives was the decision, concurred in by both the Colonial Office and the British Mission Societies, that the Fund sponsor a second African Commission, this time to visit East Africa. This Commission was authorized by the Fund's Trustees in late November, 1923, and its members, American, British and African, left London in mid-January, 1924.²³ After visiting Ethiopia, together with the several East African territories, the Commission arrived in Nyasaland on April 22nd. During the more than three weeks they spent

²² R. J. Mason, British Education in Africa (London, 1959), p. 40. For the "Derby Day Meeting" and the events surrounding it, see Professor Roland Oliver's most illuminating and succinct analysis in his The Missionary Factor in East Africa (London, 1952), pp. 263-276. Oliver terms the "Derby Day Meeting," "a turning point in the history of African education." He lists those attending the June 6th meeting chaired by Ormsby-Gore as for the Missions: Oldham, Jesse Jones, Garfield Williams (the Educational Secretary of the C.M.S.) and the Archbishop of Canterbury; for Government: Lugard, together with the Governors of Nigeria, the Gold Coast, Sierra Leone, Kenya and Nyasaland and the Colonial Secretary of Tanganyika. For a copy of Oldham's Memorandum "submitted on behalf of the Education Committee of the Conference of Missionary Societies in Great Britain and Ireland," see the Shepperson Collection.

²³ Jones, Education in East Africa, pp. xvii and xxii. For the membership of the Commission as well as its itinerary, see Appendix C.

in the Protectorate the members of the Commission traveled widely, together and in groups, visiting Stations representing all of the more important missions. Only considerations of time, and the difficulties of travel in the interior of the Northern Province, prevented them from seeing even more than in fact they did. The Commission made a deep impression, not least in the person of its African member, Dr. James Emman Kwegyir Aggrey.²⁴ Dr. Hetherwick sums up the impact of the Commission when he notes following its departure that "The results of the . . . Commission's tour were utilised later in the scheme of native education discussed between the [Nyasaland] Government and the missions when the education of the native became a matter of practical politics two years later."²⁵ To this period attention will shortly be directed, but it would first seem useful to attempt to summarize the Commission's findings with regard both to the situation in East Africa generally, and Nyasaland

²⁴For a more detailed examination of this aspect, see the relevant section in Chapter VIII.

²⁵Hetherwick, Romance of Blantyre, p. 245.

in particular.²⁶

Perhaps the essence of the Commissioners' critical reaction to the overall educational situation as it then existed in colonial Africa was best expressed in the following summation, extracted from their Report. In this they note that,

It seems clear that the educational policies of the governments and the missions have hitherto been inadequate and to a considerable extent unreal so far as the vital needs of Africa are concerned. In none of the colonies visited did the governments include the Director of Education within the Executive Councils. Appropriations for education had been negligible in comparison with the great needs. While the governments may have been justified in placing sanitation and public utilities first in order of time they should never be regarded as first in order of importance. The education of the people is in the long run fundamental even to sanitation and public order. . . . Though educational facilities in Africa are largely credited to missions and a really great service has been rendered by them to the native people, many of the missions have yet to realize the full significance of education in the development of the African people. The defects in the educational program, so far as they exist, have usually been due to

²⁶The relevant chapter of Education in East Africa is Chapter XVIII, pp. 193-218. Mention should also be made of a most interesting "Journal," kept by the Commission's young Secretary, J. W. C. Dougall throughout much of the Commission's travels, from February 18th to June 20th, 1924. A typescript was subsequently deposited at Edinburgh House, in London, but the writer is indebted to Dr. Trevor Coombe of the University of Zambia for the opportunity to make use of the portion relevant to the Commission's stay in Nyasaland.

their conception of education. Some have thought of education merely as the imparting of information, or, at most, as the development of the mind without relation to the moral and spiritual life. To such a group education has no religious significance. Others have thought of education as necessary chiefly to enable the natives to read the Bible and to understand the spirit of Christianity. This group has been content with education in books. For the masses they have provided the three Rs. For the catechists and the advanced pupils they have endeavoured to give a knowledge of literature, including of course, an interpretation of religion. In thus limiting education to classroom instruction in books, missionaries were following the ideas prevailing in their home country.²⁷

But there was in addition much the Commission found to say regarding Nyasaland specifically. It was noted that the number of children of school age in the country (approximately 250,000) was equalled more or less in pounds sterling by the sum total of "Native Revenue."²⁸ While not suggesting the expenditure of this entire sum on education, the inference was clear. The Commissioners reinforced their argument by pointing out that "money spent on education adapted to the needs of the people, supplements expenditures for the health and agricultural departments and greatly lessens the need for police and military costs."²⁹

²⁷Jones, Education in Africa (New York, 1922), p. 25.

²⁸Jones, Education in East Africa, pp. 197 and 217.

²⁹Ibid., p. 217. In relation to this point, the Report notes on p. 199 that "Hitherto the Government has spent eight times as much on police, prisons and lunatic asylums as on the education of the people. . . . One of the missions alone [Livingstonia] spends well over £21,000 per annum," at that time over ten times the total Government Grant-in-aid for the entire country.

The emphasis of the Report then shifted to the type of education best suited to the needs of the people. And here one encounters that unfortunate confusion of priorities that was to haunt the entire inter-War period.

Previously, such education as had been offered by the majority of the missions was of a predominantly "literary" nature. While some missions, notably the Scottish, had from the outset offered courses in such industrial vocations as carpentry, printing, building and the like, these had been devised at least partially with a view to absorbing those students whose primary schooling gave less promise of success for their subsequent academic attainments. Only the better students were carried forward in an academic course designed to prepare them for careers as teachers, evangelists and clerks.

The Phelps-Stokes Commission, however, perhaps influenced by the orientation of the work sponsored in the Southern states of America by their parent foundation, came down firmly in favour of an emphasis upon the improvement of conditions at the grass roots, rural village level. This viewpoint in turn seems to have persuaded Government to regard "industrial" or "vocational" education not as complementary to a more "literary" or academic approach,

but as an alternative.³⁰ The effects of this interpretation were to be far-reaching, for the unfortunate paradox was that "just at the moment when Africans were . . . beginning to demand better education and more opportunities of sharing in the white man's world, Europeans were becoming less and less ready to give active and confident help in this transition."³¹

Moreover, this course of action on the part of the Nyasaland Government was seized upon by the advocates of segregation in its varying degrees and disguises in southern Africa as a means of advancing their ends. The dangers implicit in an overly rural bias were at the time somewhat obscured by the admittedly unhappy state of village life with the poverty of its physical environment. Nevertheless, this shift in emphasis towards the virtues, undeniable in themselves, of improved hygiene and sanitation and instruction in more productive agricultural techniques was made not in concert with but at the expense of, what was then termed "higher education" but which today would be regarded as merely a well-rounded Full Primary course.

³⁰ For a more detailed treatment of one of the major implementations of this approach on the part of Government, see Chapter VI, The Jeanes Experiment.

³¹ Gray, Two Nations, p. 129.

The inherent difficulty, it would appear, lies in the fact that having once set in motion a series of revolutionary changes in a people's mode of life and scale of values, it is next to impossible to cry a halt at some given point and affirm so far and no farther. The pace of development in fact, was set not so much by Government administrators or by socio-political theorists as by the economic system which was increasingly drawing Africans and Europeans together into a state of mutual dependency. To emphasize the bolstering of tribal traditions in an attempt to perpetuate a rapidly-decaying past, to oppose the growth of a class of skilled Africans who would be at home in an urban environment, to neglect the needs of the educated African as an individual, was to resist the march of events rather than to shape it.

Up to a point the Commission recognized the interdependent nature of the goals of mass education and education for leadership but on the whole they stressed the responsibility that the school should bear towards the community as a whole. In support of this view they cited the recent "enlargement" of the field of education in Europe and in America as illustrating the development of such a relationship.

The Report closed by noting the seeming lack of communication between Missions, Government and commercial concerns, and the relative non-participation of Africans in policy planning generally. The point was stressed once again that education must be adapted to the needs of the people concerned, as much of the indifference and even opposition to education in Africa was due to the failure to adapt school work to African conditions.³²

In Nyasaland, of course, this criticism was directed of necessity at the Missions as the bodies responsible for educational policy, but Government was taken to task as well in the observation that "Many of the failures of educational systems in the past have been due to the lack of organization and supervision." The fact that "Government and Missions have not applied to their educational work the sound principles of administration which are increasingly recognized in other undertakings of importance," was seen as susceptible of explanation only by a general failure heretofore to appreciate the value of education.³³

³²Jones, Education in East Africa, pp. 7-8.

³³Most of the foregoing has been drawn from Education in East Africa, Chapter II, "Educational Objectives and Adaptations" and Chapter IV, "Cooperation for Africa and Africans." For the Commission's "Summary and Recommendations" for Nyasaland, see Appendix E. For a recent scholarly examination of the impact of the Phelps-Stokes philosophy on East Africa generally and Kenya in particular, see an unpublished Ph.D. thesis (1968) for the University of Edinburgh by Dr. K. J. King. The writer regrets that he has not had the opportunity to avail himself of the insights afforded by this last.

Further Pressures Towards Change

Almost simultaneous with the publication of Education in East Africa was that of Education Policy in British Tropical Africa,³⁴ a memorandum prepared by the Advisory Committee on Native Education in the British Tropical African Dependencies.³⁵ Writing thirty years later, one educational authority gave it as his judgment that the Memorandum "represents the foundation stone of educational effort in British tropical dependencies."³⁶ With reference to the British Government's role as opposed to the long-established efforts of Christian missions, this is very likely the case. Nevertheless, one distinguished missionary termed the Memorandum "a Magna Charta for missionary education in Africa."³⁷ Still, it should be recognized that Government Departments of Education had been established throughout British West Africa and in Kenya some years prior to the

³⁴ See Appendix E.

³⁵ This was the original title of the Advisory Committee. Subsequently, it was changed to that of the Advisory Committee on Education in the Colonies.

³⁶ L. J. Lewis, Educational Policy and Practice in British Tropical Areas (London, 1954), p. 14. Cited in David G. Scanlon, ed., Traditions of African Education (New York, 1964), p. 91.

³⁷ Hetherwick, Romance of Blantyre, p. 250. Italics mine.

First World War.³⁸

Admitting "the widely held opinion that the results of education in Africa have [heretofore] not been altogether satisfactory,"³⁹ the Memorandum's reference to "the fuller recognition of the principle that the Controlling Power is responsible as trustee for the moral advancement of the native population,"⁴⁰ acknowledged the impact of the League of Nations and the Mandate System. Recent "economic development . . . which has placed larger revenues at the disposal of the [Colonial] Administrations" was given as a factor in the "increasing interest and participation in native education" that might usefully be taken by the "Governments of these territories"⁴¹ in an attempt to remedy what has been termed "the grotesque proportions . . . of their revenue"⁴² previously spent upon native education.

³⁸ Departments had been established in the Gold Coast, 1890; Nigeria, 1903; Sierra Leone, 1909, and Kenya, 1911. Following the formation of the Advisory Committee, Departments were established in Uganda and in Northern Rhodesia in 1925 and in Nyasaland in 1926. See J. McLeod Campbell, African History in the Making (London, 1956), p. 96, from Supplement A, "A Survey of 50 Years of African Education" by W. E. F. Ward.

³⁹ Education Policy in British Tropical Africa. From the opening paragraph, "Educational Policy in British Tropical Africa."

⁴⁰ Ibid.

⁴¹ Ibid.

⁴² Oliver, Missionary Factor, p. 270.

In addition, "a fresh stimulus was added" to the already substantial effect of the Advisory Committee's Memorandum and the Report of the second Phelps-Stokes Commission by the publication, also in 1925, of the Report of the East Africa Commission.⁴³ This Commission, chaired as was the Advisory Committee by Ormsby-Gore, "concluded in one section after another [of its Report] that the successful application of a 'Dual Mandate' policy depended upon ensuring that the native peoples received a fair chance of 'economic and moral development' through a constructive programme of 'education, in the widest sense of the word.'"⁴⁴

Government now stood committed. It only remained for the missions to approve the policies of mutual cooperation that had been outlined, for African education to prepare to advance upon a broad front. This approval was happily forthcoming at the "inter-denominational" though "unofficial" international missionary conference held at Le Zoute, Belgium, in 1926. There, these policies received "the most formal degree of support" that such a gathering could confer.⁴⁵

⁴³ Report of the East Africa Commission, 1925, Cmd. 2387. Sections on Education, Labour, Native Production, Medical Services. Cited in Oliver, Missionary Factor, p. 271.

⁴⁴ Ibid.

⁴⁵ Oliver, Missionary Factor, pp. 271-272.

All this activity was not without effect in Nyasaland. Early in June, 1924, the newly appointed Governor, Sir Charles C. Bowring, "laid before the [Executive] Council a draft dispatch covering a report of the Phelps-Stokes Fund Education Commission."⁴⁶ A fortnight earlier, Governor Bowring had delivered the opening address to the 29th Session of the Legislative Council. He had expressed his pleasure at returning to the Protectorate "a quarter of a century . . . [after leaving Nyasaland] for service in another portion of our African empire." With regard to the subject of education, however, he had had this to say:

I do not wish so soon after my assumption of the government to express any definite views on the problems with which I am faced, but I can say at once that I am not satisfied with our present methods as regards native education. It appears to me that the funds made available are not only inadequate, but are also not laid out to the best advantage. I believe a great benefit will be derived from the recent visit of the Phelps-Stokes Education Commission, accompanied by the Secretary to the Colonial Office Advisory Committee on Native Education in the Tropical African Dependencies.⁴⁷ I hope that in next year's budget it will be possible to make increased provision for this important duty of the state towards the native.⁴⁸

⁴⁶ PRO: C.O. 626. Meeting of the Nyasaland Executive Council, 9th June, 1924. MP 348/24. Education. No. 113.

⁴⁷ Major Hanns Vischer. See Appendix C.

⁴⁸ PRO: C.O. 626. Twenty-ninth Session of the Nyasaland Legislative Council, 20th May, 1924.

Hetherwick, who had known Bowring at the time of his service in the Protectorate twenty-five years before, accorded him "our very hearty welcome" on behalf of the Council's unofficial members. Regarding the Governor's views on the unsatisfactory state of African education, Hetherwick rejoiced "to hear you say that by next year this will be altered."⁴⁹

At first, however, it appeared that once again hopes had been raised only to be dashed. In February, 1925, the Executive Council dealt with "the usual grant-in-aid to missions for education."⁵⁰ But six weeks later, at a meeting of the Legislative Council, the Acting Treasurer noted in moving the Appropriations Bill that

The vote for education has been increased by £1000 to allow for the appointment of a Director of Education. No further expenditure has been provided for, as after the Director's arrival, he will require some time to study conditions here before he will be in a position to advise the government, and it is not anticipated that any educational policy decided upon will be put into practice during the present year.⁵¹

⁴⁹ Ibid.

⁵⁰ PRO: C.O. 626. Meeting of the Nyasaland Executive Council, 16th February, 1925. MP 853/23. Grant-in-aid to missions.

⁵¹ PRO: C.O. 626. Thirtieth Session of the Nyasaland Legislative Council. (Second session of this meeting) 7th April, 1925.

In recognition of his efforts over the years, the last word should rightly fall to Dr. Hetherwick. Alluding to education, he recalled that

This has always been my pet motion when I speak on the estimates, and I hope now that we shall see steps in a practical way to carry out what we have been longing for for fifteen years. It is fifteen years since the matter was first brought before the government, and five years since the government expressed their intention of doing something tangible in order to advance this subject. We have waited long and I hope our patience will be rewarded by what you hinted might be our hope next year of seeing something substantial done to help in this matter of native education.⁵²

An Education Department is Established

Next year did see something both tangible and substantial. In November, 1925, Reginald Frederic Gaunt was appointed as the first Director of Education in Nyasaland.⁵³ With his arrival to take up his duties on the 30th of April, 1926, the Department may be said to have come into existence. For the remainder of 1926 the staff of the Department

⁵² Ibid.

⁵³ PRO: C.O. 626. Thirty-second Session of the Nyasaland Legislative Council, 19th April, 1926. Governor Bowring, in the course of his opening address remarked that "We have secured the services of a gentleman of high reputation with considerable experience in both East and West Africa and shall await with interest his views on the local position." In the publication of Gaunt's Will in The Times for February 9th, 1929, it is stated that from 1920 to 1923 Gaunt was Senior Inspector of Schools in Kenya.

consisted of the Director and one African clerk. And yet for the time being this was sufficient as Gaunt saw his first duty to be that of familiarizing himself with the educational work already in progress.

Immediately following his assumption of office he embarked upon a six-month tour of the country "acquainting himself with existing educational facilities, conferring with the heads of the various missionary societies with a view to obtaining their cooperation in a general scheme of education suitable to the country, and discussing educational matters with Government officials and planters."⁵⁴

In this, Gaunt seems to have been initially successful. Symptomatic of his reception was the friendly tone of a long letter written to him by a fellow Scot, the ex-missionary at Livingstonia, Donald Fraser, serving at the time as Secretary of Foreign Missions for the United Free Church of Scotland and writing from Edinburgh during the course of the 1927 General Assembly of the Church:

Let me say how deeply interested we all are in the new work you have undertaken and the spirit in which you have tackled it. All one hears from Nyasaland seems to point to the widest cooperation between you and the Missions, and those who are really interested in education recognize that you are going to bring a new

⁵⁴ Rep. Ed. Dept. May 1st, 1926 to December 31st, 1927, p. 6.

thoroughness into the Missions service which should help to widen and strengthen the reach of education.⁵⁵

The highlights of Gaunt's first year as Director, however, were two conferences held in the Protectorate during that period. The first of these was the "Fifth General Conference of the Federated Missions of Nyasaland and Contiguous Territories," held in Blantyre in late October of 1926 in order to coincide with the Jubilee celebrations of the Church of Scotland's mission there.⁵⁶ The second was convened in Zomba by Governor Bowring in May, 1927, for the sole purpose of discussing "Native Education."⁵⁷ Of the two, the latter seems to have been the more significant, partially as a result of its official imprimatur, but also because it included representatives from all of the missions operating in the country with the exception

⁵⁵ EH: File entitled "Education East Africa - Nyasaland - Education Ordinance - Correspondence with Scottish Churches, 1927-28." Letter from Fraser to Gaunt dated 25th May, 1927.

⁵⁶ Hetherwick, Romance of Blantyre, pp. 252-254.

⁵⁷ Nyasaland Protectorate: Report of the Native Education Conference convened by H.E. the Governor, Sir Charles C. Bowring, K.C.M.G., K.B.E., & held at Zomba, May, 1927 (Zomba, 1927), 55 pp. Hereinafter cited as 1927 Conference. The Conference met from May 17th to 20th.

of those administered and controlled by Africans.⁵⁸

At both conferences there appears to have been a spirit of enthusiasm, of expectancy, and of a desire to cooperate, but the vexing question of finance continued to loom large. The Zomba Conference concluded with a general acceptance of the Protectorate's first Education Ordinance. However, in the vote of thanks proposed to the Governor on behalf of the delegates at the final session, reference was made to the inadequacy of Government's financial support for education. It was urged that, if necessary, a special educational grant should be provided by the Colonial Office in order to bring Government assistance to African education into line with that "provided by the neighbouring East African colonies and protectorates."⁵⁹

Bowring expressed himself as sympathetic and promised "every endeavour" in again making representations

⁵⁸ It should be noted that with regard to the two most prominent African missions, the AME and the PIM, Rev. Hanock Msokera Phiri of the former wrote to Gaunt, regretting his inability to attend (although it is not entirely clear that an official invitation had been extended) and Dr. Daniel S. Malekebu of the latter, though not apparently an official delegate, met with Gaunt during the course of the Conference and subsequently persuaded him to pay a visit to his Mission. For further detail, see the relevant sections in Chapter VIII.

⁵⁹ 1927 Conference, p. 54.

to the Secretary of State. That he was not optimistic, however, may be inferred from his reservation that he could "make no promise" of success nor "give any pledge or in any way commit Government to . . . increased expenditure."⁶⁰

The Blantyre Conference had devoted two full days to a discussion of educational questions. Indeed, Hetherwick recalled that education "occupied much of the interest of the Conference."⁶¹ Gaunt himself had been present to expound Government's plans and intentions as well as to express his gratification at the degree of cooperation already demonstrated. A number of resolutions had been passed dealing with the Vernacular Code, Teacher Qualification, School Equipment, Hygiene, Agriculture, and School Fees.

These indicated the general willingness of the missions to support Government policy. Nonetheless, reservations were only to be expected in the light of the missions' long unquestioned dominance of the field. At the Lomba Conference, the second paper to be read following Gaunt's presentation of departmental policy was one by

⁶⁰ Ibid., p. 50.

⁶¹ Hetherwick, Romance of Blantyre, p. 254.

Rev. E. D. Bowman of the Church of Scotland entitled, "How Far Are Missions Justified in Cooperating with Government in the Cause of Native Education?"⁶²

Both the paper itself and the discussion that followed indicated a widespread preoccupation with two basic questions. One concerned the degree to which Government control would hamper the process of evangelisation. The second dealt with how much Government was prepared to pay in the form of substantially increased grants-in-aid in return for what would amount to mission acquiescence in governmental determination of educational policy.

Dealing first with the latter point, Bowman expressed the opinion that "the responsibility [for education] belongs to the Government, though I fancy they will admit that hitherto the burden of this responsibility has not weighed very heavily on their shoulders nor has it cost them many sleepless nights or empty coffers." "But," he went on to say, "we believe these days are past and that the Nyasaland Government in common with the governments in other colonies is to take a steadily increasing share in this work."⁶³

In the discussion that followed, Laws was the

⁶² 1927 Conference, pp. 15-18.

⁶³ Ibid., p. 16.

first to speak. While expressing interest in the policies outlined by the Director and a willingness to help in implementing them, he felt bound to instance the policy of the Tanganyika Government in contrast to that which had previously prevailed in Nyasaland. He pointed out, for instance, that heavy capital expenditure was entailed in the erection and maintenance of school buildings, a sphere in which "Tanganyika Territory . . . gave the Missions pound for pound." Moreover, "staff grants for Europeans [in Nyasaland] were £50 per annum whilst in Tanganyika they were £300." Laws concluded by affirming that

What I certainly cannot accept is that we should have to give up liberties and control of education in our missions to the extent that is required by Government, and yet we must still pay £45,000 out of our own pocket and only get £4000 to help us out of it. The whole of the missions are anxious and willing to help with regard to the carrying on of education, but unless there is something more definite in the way of help from Government, I cannot guarantee that our mission will accept the conditions. You are recognizing the work of the missions in the past, but now you are going to use the missions as a saving of Government money.⁶⁴

This point of view received widespread support from the representatives of other missions, notably the other two members of the C.C.A.P. However, Gaunt, while confirming once again "that the proposed grants were hopelessly

⁶⁴Ibid., p. 18.

inadequate as a return for the work done," stressed "that Nyasaland could not command funds of the magnitude of those in Tanganyika."⁶⁵

On the question of the role of religion in the schools, Bowman cited the proceedings of the previous year's Le Zoute Conference as evidence of the capacity of evangelization and education to co-exist side by side.⁶⁶ But, Bowman added, Government should recognize "our fundamental position that all educational work in Africa must end in failure if there is an attempt to divorce education from religion."⁶⁷ Gaunt's suggestion that "prayer-houses" or "church classes" might be permitted to stand side by side with "standard schools," in order "to secure the cooperation of missions in gradually raising the standard of . . . primary education" was rejected by Bowman out of hand. As no fees would be charged, Bowman argued that these classes would constitute "a strong counter-attraction to any real school in the area." Moreover--and presumably a telling

⁶⁵ Ibid.

⁶⁶ Ibid., p. 17. Bowman cited a speech by J. H. Oldham printed on p. 165 of the Le Zoute Conference Report.

⁶⁷ Ibid., p. 16. Italics mine. Here, Bowman is himself quoting "Wilkie, of the United Free Church of Scotland Mission in West Africa, a missionary of long educational experience."

point in the eyes of Government--"the learners would not be obliged to take any of the school subjects which we, but not the village natives, consider essential . . . e.g., handicraft, hygiene and sanitation, agriculture, etc., while reading and writing which to the native are the summum bonum would be open to all."⁶⁸

Bowman suggested instead the not particularly happy compromise that church classes be permitted "where reading only, taught only through religious primers and readers would be permitted."⁶⁹ Following a lengthy and often rather confused discussion it was unanimously agreed that unlike reading, "writing was not an essential part of religious instruction." There the matter rested.⁷⁰

These points, though fundamental, were but two among the many raised and given a thorough airing during the course of the four-day Conference. Some of the remainder will be touched upon in considering the voluminous correspondence

⁶⁸ Ibid., p. 17, referring to remarks made by Gaunt recorded on pp. 12-13.

⁶⁹ Ibid., p. 17. Italics Bowman's.

⁷⁰ Ibid., p. 19. In support of the proposition that discussion of these weighty issues is not always entirely without its lighter side, the record of the above discussion is included as Appendix . For this, as for the Report as a whole, we are indebted to Messrs. J. Williams and E. C. Allen, "Reporters of the Proceedings."

between Mission and Government representatives in Nyasaland, London, Edinburgh and South Africa that ensued following the Conference's conclusion. An examination of this correspondence sheds valuable light upon the views privately as well as publicly held at this pivotal time regarding the course of educational policy in the Protectorate.⁷¹

The Ordinance Controversy

That, in the course of this initial period, there should have been a certain amount of friction between Government and the leading educational Missions was only to be expected given the fact that for so long the latter had been answerable only to their Home authorities. That there was in fact so little, can perhaps be attributed to the essential goodwill of most of those concerned.

Part of the trouble lay in the fact that in the past Nyasaland, although the smallest and the poorest of Britain's East African territories, had achieved a higher

⁷¹ Among the other Papers read and subjects discussed were: The Co-ordination of Technical and Literary Training, African Citizenship: The Effect of Education on Discipline and Administration, Agriculture in Schools, Agriculture: A Course for Teachers, Hygiene and Sanitation as Applicable to Native Communities, Female Education: Child-welfare and Mothercraft, Female Education in Nyasaland, The Training of Teachers, Educational Facilities for Muhammadans, and The Place of the Vernacular in Education, 1927 Conference, p. 3.

standard of African education than any of the others. Now, unfortunately, it appeared that through lack of both Government and Mission funds a modification of objectives might have to be accepted at the very time when the other territories were starting to move rapidly ahead.

The 1927 Zomba Conference had contributed to a mood of mild euphoria. For the younger missionaries in particular "it was a time of great inspiration" and they "came away from it feeling in a new way the importance of their task."⁷²

Older heads were not so sure.

I wish that far more time could have been given after the Ordinance had been published before it was discussed. I know well how irritating it is to wait and wait before one does anything, but I ⁷³do think here it would have been a real gain.

Others saw the new Department's plans as too grandiose. "My view," wrote Hetherwick, "is that the

⁷² EH: File entitled "Education East Africa - Nyasaland, 1927-28 - Education Ordinance - General Correspondence. As this rather voluminous file is the only one to which reference is made for the remainder of this section, its title will be omitted; only the citation EH: will be employed. This quotation is taken from "The Educational Situation in Nyasaland," an article by A. Victor Murray submitted to Oldham on July 12th, 1927.

⁷³ EH: From a pamphlet written by Bishop Cathrew of the UMCA entitled Diocese of Nyasaland, Letter to the Members and Friends, Advent, 1927. (UMCA Press, Likoma, January, 1928), pp. 4-5. Italics Cathrew's.

Director has bitten off more than he can chew."⁷⁴ Loram⁷⁵

agreed with Hetherwick, now as always the chief hammer of governmental parsimony. "My first impression . . . is that the scheme is top heavy and too elaborate for a new situation"; adding that "the grants are meagre in the extreme."

But he concluded on a more optimistic note.

Having worked off that criticism may I say that I think Mr. Gaunt has done a good piece of work in putting the whole system on so clear a basis. If he will only regard this as what he can achieve in 20 years of hard work, all will be well.⁷⁶

Writing to Oldham three days later, Loram stressed the same conflicting points even more forcibly. While suggesting that "you should keep an eye on Gaunt's activities in Nyasaland . . . [as] like other officials he is neglecting the missionary and that is inexcusable in a country where mission education is so effective," he ended by avowing himself "very favourably impressed with Gaunt's presentation and plans but he is 20 years ahead of the actual situation."⁷⁷ In retrospect, it may be seen that

⁷⁴EH: From a letter, Hetherwick to Loram, June 4th, 1927.

⁷⁵A member of the Phelps-Stokes East African Commission and generally recognized as "the leading authority on Native education" in the Union of South Africa. See Appendix C.

⁷⁶EH: From a letter, Loram to Hetherwick, June 19th, 1927. *Italics Loram's.*

⁷⁷EH: From a letter, Loram to Oldham, June 22nd, 1927.

in this latter judgment Loram was pretty close to the mark,⁷⁸ but it was left to those closer to the scene to raise more specific objections. Foremost among these critics, although on different grounds, were the two Scottish missions and the UMCA.

The question that precipitated a more general airing of grievances was that of the representation of the Federated Missions on the proposed Advisory Board of Education. As initially conceived by Government there was to be a membership of 13 including "not less" than six Mission representatives. If the minimum were observed this would in itself fall short of a majority, but it was the proposed distribution of places within the Mission representation that caused the greatest furore.

The assumption of the Federated Missions had been that they would receive four of the six places on the Board, one each for the C. of S., Livingstonia and the DRC, and one for the five smaller missions. The UMCA would then receive one place as would the Roman Catholics. This would appear to have been an equitable distribution in terms of the various missions' respective financial and manpower expenditure upon education in the country at that time. However,

⁷⁸ In respect of Loram's view that Gaunt was "neglecting the missionary," the weight of the evidence seems to indicate that he erred on this point.

the Federated Missions had no formal grounds for their assumption of the above figures as a basis of representation.

A. Victor Murray was perhaps overstating the case when he wrote a month after the conclusion of the Zomba Conference that "difficulties had cropped up and cooperation seemed utterly remote."⁷⁹ Nevertheless, when the members of the Federated Missions learned, according to Murray, that they were invited to submit "two or three"⁸⁰ names, while the UMCA was invited to submit one and the Roman Catholics, two, they were immediately up in arms.⁸¹

Their concern centered on their view that the UMCA's educational policies were equivocal, with the resultant likelihood of the Federated Missions, markedly preponderant in terms of actual educational activity, being outvoted on the Board.

To an outside observer the UMCA's sympathies would be thought to lie with the Protestant missions. They shared

⁷⁹ EH: From the article submitted by Murray to Oldham, cited above.

⁸⁰ Ibid.

⁸¹ It may be appreciated that this action on the part of Government might easily have reawakened memory of the bias in favour of the Anglican and Roman Catholic missions purportedly shown by the members of the Commission of Inquiry into the 1915 Rising. For a more detailed treatment, see Chapter IV, pp. 220-242.

with them a common cultural background and a generally British orientation in contrast to the Roman Catholic missions whose representatives in Nyasaland were mainly "foreign" and for the most part non-English speaking. Still, there were serious difficulties. To begin with, the UMCA was more evangelical and less "purely" educational than were the bulk of the Federated Missions. In addition, the UMCA shared with the Roman Catholics a disinclination to levy fees for schooling. But perhaps of most importance, their theological inheritance, permeated as it was by the spirit of the Oxford Movement, tended to incline them to a philosophy similar to that of the Roman Catholics. The UMCA's view of the latter, moreover, tended to be idealized due to the fact that unlike the Protestant missions, they had had little experience of direct competition. The Roman Catholic missions had not as yet entered the Anglican mission fields on the eastern and southern shores of Lake Nyasa.

The Federated Missions, in particular their two Scottish members, were not slow to react to this fancied threat by involving their Home authorities. In the first week of July, Hetherwick dispatched a 200-word cablegram to W. B. Stevenson, the Convener of the Church of

Scotland's Foreign Missions Committee.⁸³ Hetherwick based his argument largely upon the proportional expenditure upon education of the various missions operating in the Protectorate. Leaving aside the question of its direct relevance, by bringing in the financial question Hetherwick was operating from strength. As Governor Bowring was to remark a short time later in reference to this aspect, "We are on a very weak wicket . . . and no one realizes that more than myself."⁸⁴

By the time this statement was penned the crisis was nearing a solution, but a month to six weeks previously, the Governor's degree of enlightenment had not been so apparent. Stevenson had taken the views of Hetherwick and others on the spot sufficiently seriously as to declare, in writing to Oldham, "I have no confidence at all in Bowring. He is certain to thwart us whenever he can."⁸⁵

Loram meanwhile admitted that "there are elements of

⁸³ EH: Copy of the cablegram enclosed, Hetherwick to Stevenson, July 5th, 1927. The cablegram concluded by urging "your [Stevenson] immediate action in getting ready to make strong representations to Colonial Office through influential members of Parliament," and suggests that Stevenson "Communicate with Ashcroft and Oldham."

⁸⁴ EH: From a letter, Bowring to Loram, August 27th, 1927.

⁸⁵ EH: From a letter, Stevenson to Oldham, July 9th, 1927.

disaster in Nyasaland which at one time seemed to be the most promising prize of all," one of these elements being "a Governor who bends over backwards where justice to Roman Catholics and Muslims is concerned."⁸⁶

As evidence of a lack of communication, both literally and metaphorically, all this is instructive, but it must be noted that Governor Bowring's role soon came to be seen in a more favourable light. Indeed, just over a year later, Bishop Fisher of the UMCA was to write to his Home headquarters imploring them to join Oldham in attempting to have Bowring's term as Governor extended as "He has now got the real education position clear and we can get on. If he leaves . . . and a new man who doesn't know the ropes comes here, the whole thing will be in a mess and we shall have to begin all over again."⁸⁷ By this time, even Hetherwick had come around to essentially the same point of view.

The position at the height of the furore was summed up by the experienced educationist, A. Victor Murray, who

⁸⁶ EH: From a letter, Loram to Oldham, July 23rd, 1927.

⁸⁷ EH: From a letter sent to Oldham by Ernest F. Stanton, Secretary to the UMCA's London headquarters, September 21st, 1928, quoting Bishop Fisher's views as expressed in a letter Stanton had recently received from him.

had recently spent some time in the country. Analysing the Representation question in an article that he submitted to Oldham in mid-July, 1927, for publication in the International Review of Missions, he summed up his impressions as follows:

It is difficult not to feel that this [concern of the Federated Missions] was not to some extent the fear of the strong. The Federated Board is in much the strongest position in Nyasaland and in view of the present position at home and the relations between the Missionary societies and the Colonial Office, it is difficult to see how they could in any vital sense be injured. To the Government their position was exceedingly perverse for it looked as if they were relying on the Government to solve their theological difficulties for them. It must however be said that while to many people of the Federated Missions the invitation of the Government was but another move in the Roman versus Protestant game and was held to be due to underhand machinations of the Romans, to many other people there was a serious concern about the educational future and on purely educational grounds they were opposed to Roman influence. These men felt that the progressive policy of years was threatened and that the Government in the laudable desire to be "impartial" was in fact playing into the hands of the less enlightened and less progressive educationists. The danger was probably exaggerated but the official mind did not seem to be alert enough to distinguish between these two distinct points of view on the same side; one of which, as a neutral in religious matters it was bound to ignore, but the other of which the Government as the chief promoter of educational progress was bound to consider and respect.⁸⁸

⁸⁸ EH: From the article submitted by A. Victor Murray, as cited above.

Perhaps the significance of the affair with regard to the seemingly wrong-headed attitudes demonstrated by Government, lies in Murray's observation concerning the "curiously quixotic trait so often found in British administrators which actually favours the side that it likes least in case its natural inclination should lead it to be unduly favourable. The sentiment is admirable, but in practice it works injustice."⁸⁹

In the event, the question of Representation was settled by a series of consultations the result of which was a compromise solution. Seven Mission representatives were appointed (in themselves a majority of the Board), comprising four nominees from the Federated Missions, one from the UMCA, and two from the Roman Catholics. As a result of this distribution, Bowring felt able to commence a letter to Loram on the 27th of August by announcing that "I am happy to be able to state . . . complete amity with the missionary societies on the subject of the Education Board."⁹⁰

This happy denouement, however, by no means satisfied the wide variety of complaints and reservations voiced

⁸⁹ Ibid.

⁹⁰ EH: From a letter, Bowring to Loram, August 27th, 1927.

by various missionaries throughout the Protectorate with regard to the 1927 Ordinance. As has been noted, in the forefront of this group of critics were the Scottish missions and the UMCA. Again, substantial correspondence was exchanged between the interested parties in Nyasaland and in the United Kingdom.⁹¹ As far as the complaints of the Scottish missions were concerned, however, they were most succinctly presented in a protest drawn up and circulated by the Foreign Mission Committee of the United Free Church of Scotland. The Established Church of Scotland and the UMCA both gave the protest their formal support. Its text follows, substantially condensed in the interests of clarity.

The Foreign Mission Committee of the United Free Church of Scotland recognize that in the Ordinance . . . published on 23rd May, 1927, the Government has taken a step forward in an attempt to regularize the education given to the people, and to raise it to a higher standard. They also appreciate the necessity of the Government exercising an active guardianship over the types of education given, that no seditious or dangerous elements appear. But they view with grave concern certain clauses in the Ordinance and to these they offer their strong objection.

First: The Government proposes to put all education under its own control, and to assume to suppress all schools which do not come up to their

⁹¹EH: Several files. "Education East Africa - Nyasaland - Education Ordinance - Correspondence with Scottish Churches, 1927-28"; "Education East Africa - Nyasaland, 1927-28 - Education Ordinance - General Correspondence, and a file simply entitled "Nyasaland."

standard and all teachers who have not been licensed by the Board. [The Education Board, precursor of the Advisory Committee on Education.] At the same time the Government does not see the near prospect of bearing more than one-tenth of the cost of education in the colony.

While welcoming the desire of the government to guard the people against harmful teaching the Foreign Mission Committee cannot give up their liberty to provide what education they can for their people, even though it does not attain to a full and approved government standard. For years they have spent large sums of money, and have sent out a staff of university graduates, some of them trained educationists, that they may provide a progressive improvement of education. Yet the Ordinance makes no provision for the automatic recognition of the teachers who hold the certificates of their Institutions. They have also endeavoured to lay the foundation of a literate civilization, as they recognize that the well-being of the Church is bound up with our educated membership. To do so they have used simple village schools as their agency. These schools, while essentially bound up with the work of evangelization have made an invaluable contribution to the well-being of the Protectorate, and have been the pioneers of an industrious and intelligent civilization. The Committee claim that they have the right to give what measure of education they can, even though the education does not conform to the Government curriculum, provided they do not claim grants-in-aid. They further maintain that many of their most valuable teachers, now senior in years, by virtue of their character and natural aptitude for teaching, have been good servants of the state, and though they may be unable to pass the Government standard for licensing, can still be used by the Missions as educators, provided they do not claim grants-in-aid.

Secondly: The Foreign Mission Committee of the United Free Church of Scotland hold, that until the Government is able to bear a larger share in the cost of education, and to help to train teachers, the proposed composition of the Board of Education, and of the local committees, does not provide a just proportion of representatives of those who conduct

the education of the Protectorate and bear its cost. . . .

Further, the Committee urge that to give the African a proper interest in the education for which they contribute considerably in money and men, the Government should keep in view the possibility of having educated African representatives both on the Board, and on the District Committees.

Thirdly: The Foreign Mission Committee hold that the Ordinance so elaborates certain arrangements as to reduce efficiency and add unnecessarily to the burdens resting on the "PROPRIETOR." Thus (1) the present arrangement by which missionaries in charge or "managers" communicate directly with their magistrate about licensing schools, is shifted to the "PROPRIETOR" and Director of Education, neither of whom can be aware of local conditions. . . . (2) The returns required are also unnecessarily burdensome. . . .

Fourthly: The Committee objects strongly to the clauses which penalize "managers" and "proprietors" for neglect of clerical duties. Those who have at great cost created and maintained the education of the colonies, thereby relieving the Government of the enormous work and responsibilities which it should bear in a system of national education, are treated as potential criminals, with the threat of heavy fines or imprisonment for mere neglect of clerical returns to the Government.

Fifthly: The Committee would point out that of the proposed grant of £10,000 to education, only £4500 will be given in grants in aid to native schools. They would remind the Colonial Secretary that in all their previous approaches to the Colonial Office, and to the Nyasaland Government, they have urged that an elaborate Education Department should not be set up until sufficient grants are made. Greater economy and administration could be affected by a proper cooperation between the trained educationalists of the missions and the Director of Education.

Finally: The Foreign Mission Committee would draw attention to the North Rhodesia Native Schools Ordinance 1927, whose clauses provide for the

safeguarding of the kind of teaching which may be given in schools and yet do not impose limitations on responsible mission work.⁹²

Bishop Cathrew of the UMCA lent his support to the above document in a letter to Oldham, two excerpts from which shall suffice to illustrate the views held by his Mission.

The main objection to the whole scheme [the 1927 Ordinance] is the refusal to allow simple vernacular schools which do not claim grants to continue under the missions but outside Government control. We should quite agree to such schools being subject to the old laws, ie: only to be placed a certain distance from others, only to be open with leave of the local Resident, and of course subject to suppression at any moment if they are considered seditious. This . . . is . . . a really vital point. I press it with all the force I can.

I feel that the Ordinance is unfortunate in every way. Its tone is so hostile. I am aware that it has been said officially that it will not be enforced, but many workers feel that it remains an act suspended over the heads of those who are doing the work. We look for help and advice and we are anxious to cooperate; instead of being welcomed, we are handed an elaborate code of rules which seem to consider us potential criminals and threatens us with fine and imprisonment if we do not conform to them.⁹³

These several strictures were considered with utmost seriousness by Gaunt in particular and by the

⁹² EH: Above mentioned file, "Correspondence with Scottish Churches." Also, see MRC: for copy of the memorandum.

⁹³ EH: File entitled "Education East Africa - Nyasaland - 1928. Education Ordinance, Correspondence with UMCA." The letter is undated, but was presumably written in the early weeks of 1928.

Nyasaland Government generally. Fortunately, an opportunity for representatives of the latter to discuss the entire situation with a most knowledgeable party to the overall Mission-Government dialogue was afforded by the visit to the Protectorate of J. H. Oldham. Oldham had spent the early months of 1928 in East Africa as a member of the Hilton Young Commission, appointed "to make recommendations as to whether, either by federation or some form of closer union, more effective cooperation between the different governments in Central and Eastern Africa may be secured."⁹⁴

Oldham arrived in Nyasaland in March, and a meeting of the Board of Education was convened by Governor Bowring to meet him. "Heads of Missions and others interested were invited to attend. The Ordinance and educational policy of the Government were freely discussed and various recommendations made. Later, in cooperation with the Attorney General's Department, amendments were framed to embody these recommendations."⁹⁵

Ten days after this meeting of the Board, Oldham,

⁹⁴Cmd. 3234, Report of the East African Royal Commission, Chairman: Sir Edward Hilton Young. For an informative summary of the objectives and the work of the Hilton Young Commission, see Robert G. Gregory, Sidney Webb and East Africa, Labour's Experiment with the Doctrine of Native Paramountcy (Los Angeles, 1962), pp. 68-76.

⁹⁵Rep. Ed. Dept., 1928, p. 3.

by that time in Salisbury, Southern Rhodesia, wrote as follows to Donald Fraser at the United Free Church of Scotland's offices in Edinburgh.

I went as thoroughly as I could into the situation in Nyasaland. The problem was more difficult and intricate even than I anticipated. . . . I had several talks with His Excellency [Bowring] with whom I was staying, and an afternoon with the Director of Education; another afternoon with Bowman [of the C. of S.] and W. P. Young [of Livingstonia], and a morning with the Board of Education. Then I went over to Blantyre where I met in conference representatives of all the missions including the Roman Catholics and had further talks with Bowman and Young, and final interviews with the Director of Education and the Governor. In the light of these discussions I wrote a long memorandum which I left with the Governor. In it I proposed a reorientation of policy which may, I hope, help to reconcile divergent points of view and which, if accepted, would remove the principal difficulties raised in the memorandum of the Foreign Mission Committee.⁹⁶

In the course of the letter, Oldham suggested meeting in Edinburgh with representatives of the two Scottish Churches to "explain further the whole situation."⁹⁷

This memorandum was given Gaunt's immediate attention. The Director straightwith prepared a set of comments, treating the memorandum paragraph by paragraph. On many points he found himself in agreement with the suggestions

⁹⁶EH: "Correspondence with Scottish Churches." From a letter from Oldham to Fraser, April 2nd, 1928.

⁹⁷Ibid.

put forward by Oldham. The memorandum, together with Gaunt's notes, was then given to Bowman for his perusal, unofficially, on behalf of the Scottish missions. On April 2nd, Bowman returned the memorandum to Gaunt together with a covering letter in which he stated that "I think your comments on the various paragraphs are excellent and I do not see that they can be much improved on." Following a discussion of a number of specific points in detail, Bowman concluded "I shall not say any more. I think this is enough to show I am in agreement with your notes on the situation arising out of the protests and memorandum."⁹⁸

The way now seemed clear to press ahead for a revised Ordinance. Before the end of the year, Governor Bowring "caused a new bill to be drafted amending various features of the original ordinance which had given rise to

⁹⁸ For Oldham's memorandum, Gaunt's notes, and Bowman's letter, see EH: "Correspondence with Scottish Churches." Also, for Oldham's memorandum and Gaunt's notes, see Appendix H. In addition, see PRO: C.O. 626. Thirty-sixth Session of the Nyasaland Legislative Council, 2nd April, 1928, for Governor Bowring's address in which he stated that "notwithstanding the unanimity that has been reached locally and the tact that has been displayed in the application of the Education Ordinance, misunderstandings have unfortunately arisen at home as to the effect and intentions of the new policy." The Governor then referred to the meetings arranged for the benefit of Oldham and acknowledged the latter's submission of a memorandum "which will be of the greatest value in removing any misunderstandings."

controversy." The bill was then submitted to the Secretary of State for approval.⁹⁹

A Shift in Roman Catholic Educational Policy

Reference has previously been made to the rather meagre level of education generally offered by the bulk of the schools administered by the two Roman Catholic missions that had been operating in Nyasaland since the turn of the century. To quote Professor Oliver, "'Extensive' methods had been the rule in Catholic missions in Central Africa. The networks of 'bush schools' remotely controlled from the European stations had been larger in number and even more rudimentary in character than those of the Protestant missions."¹⁰⁰

This period of the middle to late 1920's is, however, illuminated by the remarks of Mr. Richard Paterson, then a young educationist on the staff of the Church of Scotland's Blantyre Mission. Recalling the animosity engendered between Protestant and Catholic over the issue of the inauguration of new village schools, Paterson had this to say.

⁹⁹ Rep. Ed. Dept., 1928, p. 3.

¹⁰⁰ Oliver, Missionary Factor, p. 275. For a most useful brief evaluation of Catholic policy generally, see the same work, pp. 272-276.

I have attended many of these District School Committees and been very wearied by these arguments . . . when a Roman Catholic application came forward for a school. . . . Some of my colleagues, especially the small missions; the Zambezi Mission and the Nyasa Mission and I think the Dutch Reformed Church Mission felt this too; they would fight these applications tooth and nail. But the Roman Catholic attitude was to say, well, we have a right to put a school wherever we think there are children of our faith, families of our faith, we'll fight this to the last ditch. I could never get indignant about this sort of thing and think it worth while spending long discussions over this sort of thing when there was so much else to be done. . . . We tried in our own Blantyre Mission schools to have a reasonably high standard, comparatively speaking, so that if a Roman Catholic school was set half a mile away from an existing Church of Scotland school, our school would still continue to function and attract children and I had no fear of the little Roman Catholic school half a mile away. . . . Of course, many of the Roman Catholic schools were at a very low level indeed, the little schools that were running, perhaps if you examined their rolls, you found that children were in for a year and out. Very few even completed the course. Yet, my answer all the time to, it was sometimes called Roman Catholic aggression, and my answer all the time was, put up a better school and there is nothing in the world to fear. And if the Roman Catholic authorities want to have these little schools for their people, then they have a right, and their right shouldn't be taken away from them. . . . But in the early 1930s the change took place, and the Roman Catholic authorities began to pay far more attention to education than they had ever done before.¹⁰¹

The primary cause of this increased attention stemmed from the appointment in 1927 of

¹⁰¹ Personal interview with Mr. Paterson in Edinburgh, April 26th, 1967.

Mgr. Arthur Hinsley, Rector of the English College in Rome, to the special post of Visitor Apostolic to the Catholic Missions in the British Colonies in Africa. After consultations with the Colonial Office in December, 1927, Hinsley spent two years touring the length and breadth of British Africa, preaching co-operation with the education policies of the several colonial governments to an extent which involved a regrouping of the existing dispositions of Catholic missionary forces.¹⁰²

The visit of the Right Reverend Bishop Hinsley to Nyasaland in June, 1928, followed conveniently on the heels of that of Oldham's some three months earlier. Again, Governor Bowring "caused an informal conference consisting of the members of the Board of Education and others interested to be convened on 26th June."¹⁰³ There also, as at the March conference with Oldham, "The proposed amendments to the Ordinance were considered piecemeal and fully discussed."¹⁰⁴

The Visitor Apostolic naturally devoted the bulk of his time to discussions with the representatives of his faith serving in the Protectorate. Three years after his departure, the Rev. Father J. Swelsen of the MMF noted that

¹⁰² Oliver, Missionary Factor, p. 274.

¹⁰³ Rep. Ed. Dept., 1928, p. 3.

¹⁰⁴ Ibid. Reference is also made to Bishop Hinsley's visit in PRO: C.O. 626. Thirty-sixth Session of the Legislative Council, 2nd April, 1928, and Thirty-seventh Session of the Legislative Council, 16th July, 1928.

The visit of His Excellency the Archbishop Hinsley added stimulus to the Mission activities. He gave directions and much good advice and under his guidance the standard of elementary education throughout the Mission's sphere of activity is gradually but surely attaining a standard far in advance of its expectations in so short a time and is most gratifying to all those Fathers who have given their all in the interests of the natives.¹⁰⁵

Richard Paterson warmly recalled the occasion of the visit of the distinguished cleric in conversation with the writer in 1967.

Have you a record of Hinsley's visit? . . . I can remember one Council Meeting when I had gone to visit Monseigneur Hinsley, by invitation, when I appeared at the Council Meeting [laughter] someone had placed two candlesticks by my place! It was all very good humoured, however. . . . The interesting thing was that I was asked to go to the meetings with Hinsley. I suppose because my attitude was perhaps fairly well known among the Roman Catholic Missions. And I met Hinsley and had a word or two with him. And of course he was a Yorkshireman you know, and a very delightful man, a most spiritually minded leader of men. I have a great admiration for him. And I was at a little meeting with Hinsley and the Fathers; I don't know why they put me in there at all. It was the kind of thing one didn't hear of in those days, at a time like that when the divisions were so great. Today, all right. But Hinsley spoke to the Fathers there as a father talking to his sons, and giving them directions you know. And saying to them that they lived in changing times and that the Roman Catholic Missions had to fulfill a very high task in Africa and that he had a great regard

¹⁰⁵ Rep. Ed. Dept., 1931, p. 23, in the course of Swelsen's "Historical Survey of the Montfort Marist Father's Mission." For an original copy, see also MRC:

for the Missions in Africa, and he said, "I constantly think of you and remember you in my prayers and I want this work in the care and education of the African peoples to go on." . . . It was a clear indication to go ahead, and as far as I can remember he indicated that there would be no question of difficulties in Rome.¹⁰⁶

A "clear indication to go ahead," and "no question of difficulties in Rome." Rome indeed, through the Propaganda, was attempting "to coordinate the activities of its dependent missions in relation to the native policy of the colonial powers and to pursue what Pope Pius XI is said to have described as a 'politique de présence.'"¹⁰⁷ "Collaborate with all your power," affirmed Hinsley at a conference of Catholic dignitaries held in Dar-es-Salaam in the following August. "Where it is impossible for you to carry on both the immediate task of evangelisation and your educational work, neglect your churches in order to perfect your schools."¹⁰⁸

The final word may usefully be left to Mr. Paterson.

By the way [laughter] I've never shared in this feeling of resentment against the Roman Catholic Church. I wouldn't for a moment accept the

¹⁰⁶ Personal interview with Mr. Paterson.

¹⁰⁷ Oliver, Missionary Factor, p. 274.

¹⁰⁸ Ibid., p. 275. For the full "Recommendations of the Visitor Apostolic" given at Dar-es-Salaam, see Appendix G.

Roman Catholic Church, but in our missionary work I felt that no useful purpose was served by making aggressive remarks, or unpleasant remarks about the activities of the Roman Catholic Missions. Indeed we [Paterson and his wife] had some quite good friends among the Fathers. Some of them lived very lonely lives you know, in their missions. And one or two used to come occasionally to have tea with us, and when our little baby son was born in Nyasaland they were fascinated by the child in the family you know, because they had left their home life behind them forever. Well now, this I think possibly coloured my attitude.

. . . It was no part of our Christian duty to show enmity towards these men and their work.

. . . But in the schools then, there was always a feeling, a general feeling against the Roman Catholic Missions that they were interlopers; that the Protestant missions had been first in the country you know, and these people came in and wherever we were they followed us, and this kind of thing, and a good deal of bitterness; but I never shared in it. . . . Before 1935 some of the men were very ordinary village priests you know, just laddies . . . some [French] Canadians, but mostly French, Belgian.¹⁰⁹

The 1930 Ordinance

The way now seemed clear towards the passage of a more realistic Education Ordinance, more realistic in the sense that it took cognizance, as Loram and others had recognised, of the limitations of available manpower and finance. But first, education in Nyasaland suffered a

¹⁰⁹ Personal interview with Mr. Paterson. With regard to the last point, it is of interest that Oliver notes that all Catholic "missionaries were to study to attain a perfect command of English." Missionary Factor, p. 275.

severe blow in the death while on leave in London in the autumn of 1928 of the Director of Education, R. F. Gaunt "as the result of an operation for appendicitis."¹¹⁰ It goes without saying that his untimely death came as a great shock to all. Expressions of this shock and of sympathy for his widow were many, but perhaps the most appropriate to cite here were the words penned by Robert Caldwell, Gaunt's Assistant Director and now the Acting Director of Education for the Protectorate.

In opening the second annual report of the Education Department of Nyasaland it is befitting to place on record an expression of the deep sense of loss felt by the department and all interested in education in the Protectorate through the death while on leave of Mr. R. F. Gaunt, the Director. During the one tour which he spent in Nyasaland he, with slender resources of staff and money, brought the department into existence and established it in the face of many difficulties. To gain unanimity and uniformity in a country where, through the devoted labours of the mission societies, elementary education for the native population was already so widespread, was no easy task. To win acceptance for even the broadest principles of co-operation and control was a noteworthy achievement. After this it was certain that his sympathetic understanding of particular difficulties would ensure complete harmony and confidence had he been spared to carry on the work he had begun.¹¹¹

¹¹⁰ EH: File entitled "Education East Africa - Nyasaland - 1928. Education Ordinance, Correspondence with UMCA." From a letter from Oldham to Spanton, October 31st, 1928.

¹¹¹ Rep. Ed. Dept., 1928, p. 3.

Caldwell assumed control of the Department pending the appointment of a new Director, but inevitably, some delay was incurred in the implementation of the new Ordinance.

A month prior to Gaunt's departure from the Protectorate on leave in late August, 1928,¹¹² Governor Bowring addressed a meeting of the Legislative Council. He took note of the recent visits to Nyasaland of Oldham and Bishop Hinsley and of the educational conferences that took place during their visits. As a result of these conferences, and of a subsequent meeting of the Board of Education, the Governor stated that

I have decided to prepare a fresh Education Bill which will, I trust, be found to remove most of the objections which have been raised both at home and out here to the existing Education Ordinance.

Bowring gave it as his opinion that

The bulk of these objections were against the wording of the Ordinance and not against the manner in which it has been administered in actual practice.

He concluded by observing that

As soon as this new Bill has been considered by the Secretary of State, who will doubtless wish to consult his Advisory Committee on the

¹¹² Ibid.

subject, I propose that it be published locally for a period of six months before being introduced in this honourable Council.¹¹³

During the course of the Legislative Council's next meeting, in November, Governor Bowring noted that "the draft Education Bill to which I referred the last session has been duly prepared and is with the Secretary of State."¹¹⁴ There matters rested until the following March. In that month, at a meeting of the Executive Council, the Secretary of State's despatch relating to the proposed Education Bill was a major subject of discussion. Following this discussion the Council "recommended certain modifications of the suggestions of the Colonial Office Advisory Committee."¹¹⁵ It was further recommended that a meeting of the Executive Committee of the Board of Education be called in order to consider the Advisory Committee's suggestions together with the modifications suggested by the Executive Council.¹¹⁶

¹¹³ PRO: C.O. 626. Thirty-seventh Session of the Nyasaland Legislative Council, 16th July, 1928.

¹¹⁴ PRO: C.O. 626. Thirty-eighth Session of the Nyasaland Legislative Council, 12th November, 1928.

¹¹⁵ PRO: C.O. 626. Meeting of the Nyasaland Executive Council, 21st March, 1929, MP 1054A/1926. Minute No. 84. The despatch referred to from the Secretary of State was No. 38 of February 7th, 1929.

¹¹⁶ Ibid.

Such a meeting was duly convened a month later. The Executive Committee briefly considered three fundamental points. First, the distinction between "school," and "church classes" or "prayer houses" was clarified as was the definition of an "assisted school." Secondly it was agreed, following some discussion, that all applications for the opening of new schools "must be forwarded through the local District School Committee" for the approval of the Director of Education. Third and last, the Director was empowered to remove any teacher from the official "list of teachers recognized by the Department," subject only to an appeal to the Governor "whose decision shall be final."¹¹⁷ These represented the only alterations resulting from a clause by clause examination of the Bill, however the Committee agreed "that when the bill passed into law a number of modifications to the 'Rules' made under the 1927 Ordinance would be necessary."¹¹⁸

On the following day, the Executive Council met and agreed that the Bill "should be introduced and read

¹¹⁷MRC: "Executive Committee of the Board of Education, Summary of Proceedings of a Meeting Held on Wednesday, 17th April, 1929," pp. 1-3. It is perhaps worth noting that in addition to Caldwell, Mr. Richard Paterson of the C. of S. and J. G. Steytler of the DRC also served on this Executive Committee.

¹¹⁸Ibid., p. 4.

a first time"¹¹⁹ at the next meeting of the Legislative Council. This in turn was held some ten days later with Caldwell, in his capacity as Acting Director of Education, appointed an extraordinary member of the Council by the Governor for the purpose of introducing the Bill.

Governor Bowring opened the proceedings by noting that he "had hoped that it would have been possible to publish the Bill several months ago" adding that it was "a matter of profound regret to me that I shall not be able to see the Education Ordinance promulgated before I relinquish the Government."¹²⁰ Caldwell then introduced the Bill, recapitulating in some detail the objections expressed by "certain missions" to "features in the [1927] Ordinance." Before moving the first reading the Acting Director outlined "the main points of difference between this Bill and the 1927 Ordinance."¹²¹ They may be summarized as follows:

The membership of the Board of Education has been increased from 13 to 15 . . . allowing for the appointment of a lady member in the interest of girls' education and also an African member.

¹¹⁹ PRO: C.O. 626. Meeting of the Nyasaland Executive Council, 18th April, 1929. MP 105A/1926. Minute No. 120.

¹²⁰ PRO: C.O. 626. Thirty-ninth Session of the Nyasaland Legislative Council, 29th April, 1929.

¹²¹ Ibid.

The method of representation on the Board has been changed in order to allow for the attendance of the head of the mission in place of the educational representative should he so desire if questions of a nature affecting the general policy of his mission are involved.

The type of returns required annually from managers of schools has been simplified considerably. Fewer particulars will be required in the case of non-assisted schools than in the case of assisted schools.

The section in the Ordinance regulating the opening of new schools has been altered entirely.

The power to close schools given under the old Ordinance has been modified very considerably.

The words in the penal clauses to which exception was taken have been deleted.¹²²

Caldwell concluded his presentation by noting that during the Bill's committee stage "Government will introduce some further amendments"¹²³ embodying the modifications considered by the Executive Committee of the Board of Education.

The Bill then proceeded to hang fire for almost a year before its final passage. The reasons for this are not entirely clear, but appear to be largely a product of the normal delay between meetings of the Legislative Council coupled with the complications involved in the departure of Governor Bowring and his succession by

¹²² Ibid. It should be noted that the provision for the appointment of an African member was not exercised until 1933 with the selection in that year of Levi Z. Mumba. See Chapter VIII for an examination of his role.

¹²³ Ibid.

Governor T. S. W. Thomas. Then too, the new Director of Education, A. Travers Lacey,¹²⁴ was appointed towards the close of the year and final passage of this important Ordinance was presumably delayed pending his arrival in the Protectorate. This took place early the following year with Lacey's assumption of duty on February 15th, 1930.¹²⁵ Early in April, the Legislative Council met and considered the Bill as finally amended. Lacey emphasized that "Experience may prove that the Bill is not ideal and that amendment is necessary, but in its present form the Bill embodies principles which have met with the full approval of the majority of those engaged in educational work in the Protectorate and of His Majesty's Secretary of State."¹²⁶ The Bill was then read a second time, considered by the Council in committee section by section prior to its adoption without further amendment,

¹²⁴ Alfred Travers Lacey, a graduate of Cambridge University, had seen service in World War I prior to accepting an appointment as Superintendent of Education for Tabora Province in Tanganyika. He subsequently served from 1925 as the founding Headmaster of Tabora Government School, often referred to as "the Eton of Tanganyika." See J. Huxley, Africa View (London, 1931), pp. 96-101, and J. Listowel, The Making of Tanganyika (London, 1965), pp. 88-92 and passim.

¹²⁵ Rep. Ed. Dept., 1930, p. 5.

¹²⁶ PRO: C.O. 626. Forty-first Session of the Nyasaland Legislative Council, 7th April, 1930.

read a third time and passed. Four days later, on April 11th, 1930, the Bill received Governor Thomas' assent and was enacted as Ordinance No. 5 of 1930.¹²⁷

It only remains to comment that the labour of all concerned in revising the initial Ordinance may be seen in retrospect as justified as the 1930 Ordinance remained in effect with only minimal alteration¹²⁸ for some fifteen years, only giving way at last to an embodiment of Government's vastly increased responsibilities in the field of education as acknowledged in 1945.¹²⁹ Certainly the care taken to accommodate the views of the more influential missions was only common sense in the light of the fact that throughout the coming decade and a half these missions were to continue to play collectively a preponderant role in the day-to-day management, the physical accommodation and the financing of African education throughout the Protectorate. The path now lay open under the guidance of the able, imaginative and experienced Lacey to work for a general consolidation and improvement of

¹²⁷ MRC: Nyasaland Protectorate: No. 5 of 1930. An Ordinance to provide for the Management of Education in the Nyasaland Protectorate (Zomba, 1930), p. 1.

¹²⁸ For these alterations, see Chapter VII.

¹²⁹ For this, and for the 1945 Education Ordinance, see Chapter IX.

education on a country-wide basis. But before turning to an examination of the successes (and the obstacles to success) that marked the 1930's, attention should be directed to that area in which Government's role as such was most marked, that of the establishment and development throughout this period of the Jeanes Centre at Domasi.